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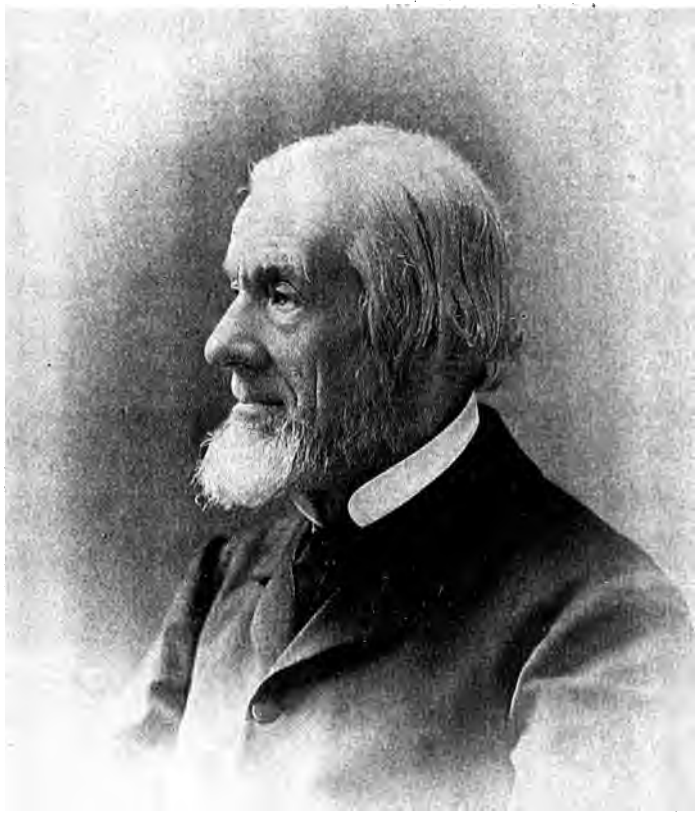

Photo by Lambert, Weston & Son Folkestone.

William Lobb

William White

A Brother of Men

BY

OLIVER MORLAND

BIRMINGHAM
MORLAND & Co. 170 Edmund Street
LONDON
HEADLEY BROTHERS 14 Bishopsgate Street Without
1903

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The publication of a Short Biography of William White calls for no apology for his wide humanity touched life at many points; and the number of those who knew and loved him cannot be counted.

William White kept no diary, or copies of letters written by him, and destroyed nearly all letters received (except those from his Scholars), so that the material at my disposal has been limited.

I was brought closely into contact with him, in various ways, during the last twelve years of his Life; but, for the record of his early years I am much indebted to the kindness of many of his old friends and especially to his sister, Mrs. Pike.

OLIVER MORLAND.

BIRMINGHAM,
May, 1903.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE AT READING.

> "Our boast is not that we deduce our birth
> From loins enthroned or rulers of the earth:
> But higher far our proud pretensions rise
> Children of parents passed into the skies."

THE above lines are quoted by William White on the title page of the pedigree of the White and Page families compiled by him in 1887. His pride in his fore-bears was not without warrant if the record of four generations of honest Berkshire tradesmen speaks truly.

The first member of the White family, of whom we have knowledge, was one Thomas White, a native of Hampshire who, born in 1679, settled in Newbury at the close of the Seventeenth Century, and there carried on the trade of a wool-comber. Ever since the time of the redoubtable "Jack of Newbury" who, in 1573, equipped one hundred of his weavers, "fifty tall men well mounted and fifty footmen with bow and pike," and sent them to take their part in the defeat of the Scots army on Flodden Field, the town had been a noted centre of the

woollen trade. The Wool Hall still stands, a quaint old building near the market place, but the looms have long been silent.

Thomas White died in 1755, and was buried, as were many of his descendants, in the parish churchyard of Newbury, overshadowed by the fine perpendicular tower erected by the above-mentioned "Jack," of Flodden fame.

It is recorded of the second Thomas White that, in April 1747, he walked a distance of thirty-six miles from Newbury to London, in order to witness the beheading of the rebel lords (Lovat, Balmerino, and Kilmarnock) on Tower Hill, after the hopes of the Young Pretender had been crushed by defeat on Culloden Moor. This was the last occasion on which men were beheaded in England for high treason.

The woollen trade seems to have been a fairly prosperous one; for, after Thomas White's death, a thousand guineas were discovered hidden away in an old stocking, and he also left considerable house property in Newbury. His younger brother John (the grandfather of William White) followed the same trade as his father. He was reputed to be the tallest and strongest man in Newbury. About the time of his death, in 1775, the manufacture of woollen cloth, for which the town had been famous for two hundred and fifty years, entirely ceased, and with it, of course, the wool-combers also lost their employment. Isaac White, son of John, lived the

whole of his life in Newbury, and carried on the trade of a tailor with no little success and local fame. He married, at the age of 19, Sarah Bailey, of Speen, near Newbury, the daughter of Lord Craven's bailiff. They had thirteen children, of whom ten grew to adult years.

In 1811, Sir John Throckmorton, a famous Berkshire squire, being probably, after the custom of that time, somewhat mellowed with wine, laid a wager of 1,000 guineas that, "at eight o'clock in the evening on June 25th, he would sit down to dinner in a well-woven, well-dyed, well-made coat, the wool of which had formed the fleeces on the backs of sheep at five o'clock that same morning." The wager was accepted by a friend of Sir John. The sheep were shorn; the wool was washed, carded, stubbed, roved, spun, and woven; the cloth was scoured, fulled, tented, raised, sheared, dyed, and dressed; and then Isaac White's son, James, cut out the coat, which was made up by two journeymen tailors, one of whom, Thomas Brazier, worked for the Whites for nearly 50 years. At a quarter past six in the evening the worthy baronet sat down to dine at the head of his guests in the new damson-coloured coat, thus winning the wager with an hour and three-quarters to spare. The event was recorded on canvas by a local artist of the day, and engraved copies of the painting were published.

William White's father, John White, was born

in 1779, and was educated at a school kept by Mr. Ralph Willis, in Northbrook Street, Newbury. His copy and cyphering books, still in existence, evince care and proficiency. There also remain some educational books and the Pilgrim's Progress given him by his mother. Of her he always spoke with respect and filial love, and she was accustomed to say that "her son John had never occasioned her an hour's trouble." He was apprenticed at Hungerford to an upholsterer and cabinet maker in the year 1793. Hard work and poor coarse fare was his lot at this time of his life. He used to speak of "small beer for breakfast", and "thin broth for dinner", as part of his diet. He finished his apprenticeship in 1800, and went to London for improvement; and on his departure, his mother gave him an umbrella—an article rare among men in those days. In 1805 he married Emily Page, the grand-daughter of Dr. Hunt of Reading. John White was then in the employ of Henry Tagg, a Reading upholsterer, and he and his bride were married in St. Lawrence's Church by the well-known Dr. William Marsh.

The young couple began married life in a house in St. Mary's Churchyard, and here were born the first three of the large family of thirteen children, nine of whom lived to old age. In 1811 John White entered into partnership with his employer under the style of Tagg and White,

and removed to the business house, now 35, London Street. In 1813 Mr. Tagg died; and the business was carried on by the junior partner until 1854, but with the assistance of his sons in later years.

The house, which originally bore the name of The Manor House, must have been an old one a hundred years ago. The front-parlours—with their low ceilings, were converted into a large shop, which is but little changed at the present time. The large rooms afforded abundance of space for storing the stock of furniture and the increasing family of children; and a range of workshops at the rear gave further facilities for cabinet making and upholstering.

John and Emily White's ninth child and sixth son was born on July 31st, 1820, and was named William, after his maternal grandfather William Page. His parents were still members of the Established Church, and the child was baptised according to the rites of that body; but they soon afterwards joined the Wesleyans. One of the earliest glimpses that we get of William White as a child is in the old workshop, where, on Sunday afternoons, the children used to play at "Chapel." William's sermons are described by one who had her place in the congregation, as being delivered quite seriously by the youthful teacher and listened to with due solemnity. He had an early fondness for taking his text from the Apocrypha—the story of Bel and the Dragon being a special

favourite. The children owed much to their mother's sister, Maria Page, who for many years kept a successful Preparatory School in Broad Street, Reading, and is described as careful and painstaking in what she taught, shrewd, quick-witted, kind and self-sacrificing. When he was nine years old, William was sent to the Castle Street Academy, conducted by Mr. Greathead. It was a good school, but one at least of the lessons then taught would hardly be considered suitable for children in the present age. In January, 1832, a special assize was appointed at Reading to try some 300 poor wretches who had been guilty of taking part in the riots preceding the passing of the Reform Bill. Many were transported, three sentenced to death; and one was hanged. The schoolboys were taken into the Abbey ruins — each school in Reading having its own proper station—to see the prisoners hanged. This "solemn moral" object lesson was afterwards enforced by an exhortation in school to mend their ways lest such a fate should be theirs, and was further emphasised by the singing of such hymns as Dr. Watts',

> "Oft we see a young beginner
> Practise little pilfering ways,
> Till grown up a hardened sinner,
> Then the gallows ends his days."

We can hardly wonder that William White used to say how such object lessons sickened him, and how he would break down in hysterical tears, while the

impression left on his mind was that most probably such also would be the sad end of himself and his school fellows, though possibly by some kind providence they might be delivered. A pleasanter memory of the Castle Street Academy was connected with a young teacher, named Isaac Holden, who afterwards became famous as the inventor of improved wool-combing machinery which wrought a revolution in the woollen trade throughout the world. He was only at Reading for two years, but got on so well that, by the end of the first term, he was able to establish a series of lectures on science and history which he gave to the pupils on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

In the course of one of his chemical lectures Isaac Holden shewed his pupils how an instantaneous light might be obtained on wood by putting sulphur under the explosive mixture with which the head of the match was covered. One of his pupils immediately wrote about it to his father, who was a chemist in London, and shortly afterwards lucifer matches were issued to the world. Forty years later, William White renewed his acquaintance with his old teacher, with whom he had many interests and tastes in common, and they formed a friendship which was only broken by Sir Isaac Holden's death in 1898.

William White was much interested in these lectures, and having a good memory, he would come

to the Preparatory School in his holidays, and in boyish fashion rehearse them to the young scholars, who with their governess were very glad to listen. William was favoured with three *weeks* holiday, but in those days junior schools had only three *days* at Christmas and Midsummer.

The Winter Evening Lectures took place in the pleasant sitting-room kitchen, where the five juniors, with their maid, used to spend the time listening to discourses on Astronomy, illustrated by diagrams of William White's own making. Any rhymes on the subject were useful, such as "The Ram, The Bull, The Heavenly Twins"; "The Sun revolving on his axis turns"; and one piece, "The Solar System," by Rev. Leigh Richmond, was a great favourite, as it gave the diameters of all the planets then known, with their distances from the sun. His elder brothers, Walter and John, were much interested in electricity, and from them he learned how to use "the electrifying machine," as it was called in those days; on this subject, too, he gave his eager kitchen audience lectures and experiments. He had also a magic lantern which was a source of great enjoyment, in spite of the strong smell from the very unsatisfactory oil lamp.

In 1832 he assisted at a great dinner given in the streets to 4,000 people to celebrate the passing of the Reform Bill, and he and his brothers went

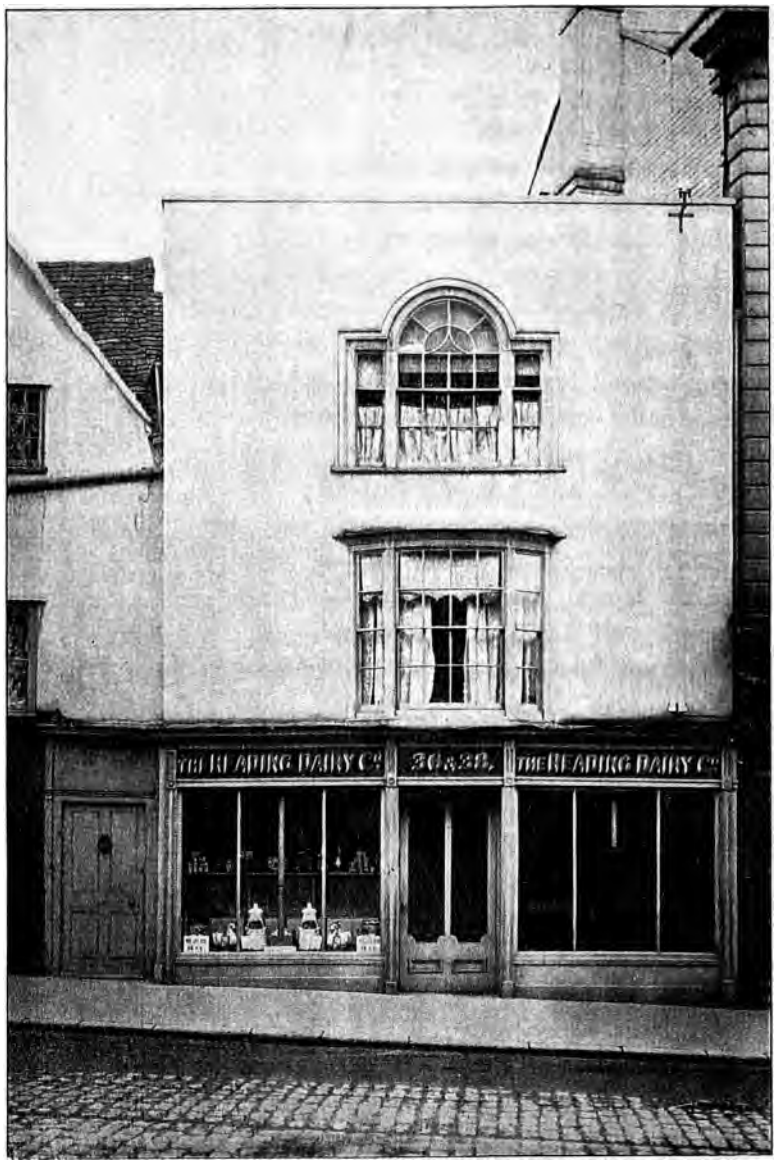

Photo by S. Victor White, Reading.

WILLIAM WHITE'S BIRTHPLACE, LONDON STREET, READING.

out into the country lanes at four in the morning to fetch branches for the decorations.

One well-remembered incident of his boyhood was connected with Strathfieldsaye, the seat of the great Duke of Wellington. The son of Mr. Phillips, the Duke's steward, was one day, in William's presence, climbing a tree in the "Long Oak Avenue," when he saw the old Duke approaching on horseback. Knowing the Duke's great dislike to boys climbing, the lad became so nervous that he lost his hold, and falling from a considerable height was much injured, and died within a few days.

On another occasion William took a Sunday walk to Silchester with his eldest brother, Walter (whose "Journals" he edited nearly seventy years later). On their way they met the Duke of Wellington and touched their hats to him. The Duke "hoped they were going to church." Walter replied that they were going to Silchester, when the Duke said, sternly, "I am sorry for you, young men, that you do not pay more respect to the duties of religion."

In 1830 Elizabeth, the youngest child of John and Emily White was born; and the family then, and for many years afterwards, consisted of four brothers and five sisters, so that the lofts and workshops in London Street did not lack the sound of voices of children at play. Country walks were a great source of joy to the young folks; the favourite one was to Caversham along a narrow

footpath, called the Vastern Path, under the willows by the river. Writing, long afterwards in 1895, of this walk, William White said, "Reading had done many good things, but it did a bad thing for the river scenery when it refused to allow those beautiful meadows and the picturesque walk along the river, between the Clappers and the Bridge, to remain undisturbed and undefiled as they had been from age to age. From thence the pleasant Caversham Hills could be seen and the stretch of the Warren as far as the eye could reach up the river. From the Caversham Bridge, an old timbered one removed in 1830, a beautiful view was obtained both up and down the Thames, and also of the town with its spires."

Of Reading itself, he says: "The only police at that time were the three parish beadles, and also the three parish night watchmen, who went round with their horn lanterns and called out the hour. The Post Office, the only one in Reading, was situated in London Street, and was kept by a very energetic Miss White (no relative), and occupied a very small space. Letters were costly things, for the postage was 7d. on a letter from Reading to London, and 10d. to Birmingham. Three postmen did the business outside the Post Office, while Miss White did the office work."

The site of the present Biscuit Factory of Messrs. Huntley and Palmers was then a solitary meadow,

with a broad ditch separating it from Watlington Lane. Here the haymakers were busy in summer, and in winter William White first learnt to skate on the frozen floods. He was fond of out-door exercises, and recounted with pride how he had swum across the Thames on his tenth birthday.

Altogether it was a pleasant childhood to look back upon, not in any way remarkable, but full of quiet family joys and simple pleasures, and brightened by the love and sympathy of the two dear parents. The father was "a man of great industry, spending his leisure time in profitable reading, a humble and devout Christian, constantly but with deep reverence, referring to the blessings of Divine Providence and possessing in no small degree the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." The mother was "comely in person, of a very cheerful and hopeful disposition, quick-witted and lively, and, like her husband, fond of good reading, and a true Christian." Much, indeed, did their children owe to such parents.

William White's early training and associations were, as we have seen, such as would naturally tend to influence him in the direction of a Christian life, and we can well believe that, as was said of his father before him, he never caused his parents an hour's trouble. But it is one thing to be a negative Christian, to have "no redeeming vices," and quite another to shew forth by a life of active love and

self-sacrifice the reality of the motive force inspiring our life.

In the year 1837 there was a secession from the Wesleyan Chapel, Mr. White's family being prominent among the dissentients. A long disused chapel in Silver Street was taken by the little company of seceders who styled themselves Independent Methodists. William White was in his element, helping to get the place in order for the services, and for a Sunday School which his father saw was needed in that locality; so together they canvassed the street, enquiring at each house if there were children, and if they would like to send them to school. Sometimes the question "have you any children here?" was met by a hasty "yes, a houseful," and the door slammed in their faces. At last, despite many rebuffs, a school was collected, which after a time had to be removed to a large suitable room close by.

In this work, for which his peculiar fitness at once became apparent, William White was thrown into contact with members of the Society of Friends, some of whom, notably his contemporaries, Thomas and Alfred Gregory, and a few years later George and William Isaac Palmer, exercised a great influence in his life, and we may well believe were in their turn helped by association with the earnest young Wesleyan.

It was natural that William White should be

among the first in Reading to sign the Total Abstinence Pledge, which he did in 1839, and still more natural, the young man being what he was, that he should devote himself to the new crusade with all the enthusiasm of his nature.

In the early days of the Movement it was no light task to face the ridicule and abuse that greeted those who had proclaimed their intention of doing without intoxicating drink. Teetotallers were regarded almost in the light of suicides by some, while even the Insurance Companies refused to accept them as good lives.

The first Teetotaller in Reading was a well-known Friend, named George Rickman, who from that time and for nearly forty years afterwards threw his whole soul into the Temperance reformation. One day he was accosted by a medical man, well known to be fond of his glass, with the remark, "Hallo, Mr. Rickman, how thin you are getting; if you don't give up that teetotal nonsense you'll be dead in six months." "I tell thee what," was the reply, "if I do, I shall die sober; take care of thyself, and when thy Maker calls thee, die sober too." The Doctor was in his grave before many months had gone by.

George Rickman had been noted for the excellent quality of his home-made wine, manufactured from grapes grown in the garden behind his house in London Street; but after signing the pledge he was greatly exercised by the frequent applications of his

old friends for a bottle. He finally settled the matter in summary fashion by emptying out the wine in his garden, where we may hope the liquor did no serious injury to the plants.

William White was one of the numerous guests who were at the funeral of the stock of beer, wine and spirits belonging to Richard Webb, of Calcot. near Reading. This ceremony also took place in the garden, the liquor being poured into a large hole dug for the purpose.

Writing of this event in 1865, Richard Webb said: "About 50 persons were at the funeral, and not a tear was shed. After the ceremony a harvest home supper was provided under a tent on the lawn, when nearly 150 persons sat down to a good substantial meal consisting of a roast sheep, two rounds of beef, barley puddings and a copper of coffee, after which they listened to a good Temperance lecture and then returned home free from any intoxication. Although this occurred more than 28 years ago there has not been a drop of alcoholic drink allowed in the house or on the premises since, not even for medicinal purposes, nor has the deed ever been repented of, but, on the contrary, rejoiced over to this day."

William White was fond of quoting the verses engraved on the tombstone erected on the spot, and, they are perhaps interesting as an illustration of the thoroughness and enthusiasm as well as the grim theology of the early Temperance pioneers.

"Beneath this stone lies buried
Our race's deadliest foe;
Myriads he has hurried
Down to the realms of woe."

"More mischief he produces
Than filled Pandora's box,
And more disease induces
Than plagu'd th'Egyptian flocks."

"Evils attend his reign,
Yet thousands own his sway,
And madly hug the chain
That drags their souls away."

"Reader! beware his wiles,
He lurks within the bowl,
And stabs you while he smiles,
Then, Oh! shun alcohol!"

But the Temperance propaganda of the Thirties did not entirely consist of epigrammatic verses and melodramatic funerals; there was much solid work done in the way of public meetings and private influence. As Jemmy Elliott, the reformed drunkard, used to say, "Ah, I should have clean tumbled down again, if my friend Mr. Rickman hadn't held me up again and again. He's watched me a'most night and day."

We owe much to George Rickman, if it was from him that William White learned that lesson of patient perseverance in seeking and uplifting the fallen which he so wonderfully put in practice in his after-life. Most excellent training too, in public speaking, did William White and his young friends get in the rough and tumble of the early Temperance meetings.

One of his contemporaries of those days recalls

how they used to walk together from Reading to Newbury (17 miles), hold a Temperance meeting, sleep at the house of some hospitable friend and then tramp back early the next morning. This was probably about the year 1839—40.

But William White's life did not consist of Temperance work and outdoor preaching alone, for, when he was thirteen years of age, he had been apprenticed to Richard Parsons, a printer and bookseller in Duke Street. In those days of heavy taxes on newspapers and advertisements the number of London daily papers sent down to Reading was ridiculously small, and the daily supply to Mr. Parsons, who was then the chief newsagent of the town, was one copy of the *Times*, two of the *Morning Herald*, and two of the *Morning Chronicle*. The chief duty of the young apprentice seems to have been to wait at the top of London Street, where the first Bath and Bristol coach stopped, for the delivery of the London papers, which he used afterwards to carry round to the subscribers, who were allowed two hours each to read them. It was sometimes a difficult matter to recover possession of a paper after the stipulated two hours, as each reader would consider himself entitled to a little extra allowance. In many places in Reading there used to be a notice put up "*The Reading Chronicle* let out to be read at 1d. per hour." Every public-house used to make a little addition to its income by this means.

William White always had a healthy sense of the humorous in life, and could enjoy perpetrating a practical joke when he was young. With what a chuckle he used to tell of putting a brick in a neat paper parcel, when he was apprenticed to the Reading bookseller, putting it on the pavement outside the shop, and of the delight with which he and his fellow 'prentices watched a pious scripture-reader or "local" come along and after furtively looking up and down the street to make sure that no one was about, hastily transfer the supposed treasure to his coat-tail pocket.

The business was relinquished before the term of the indentures expired and they were cancelled by mutual agreement, and, in 1838, William White went to Burton-on-Trent for a year as "improver," to William Wesley, a printer and bookseller of that town. We may be certain that he found opportunity for making his services of value to his employer, while at the same time gaining further experience in his trade. He also enjoyed country walks on Sunday afternoons, and used to recall how on one occasion he spent some hours "treed" in the crown of a pollard willow, while an infuriated bull kept guard underneath. Probably the humour of the situation was not lost sight of at the time, though the ludicrous side of such little incidents is apt to be more strongly apparent when distance lends enchantment to the view.

CHAPTER II.

BURTON AND BIRMINGHAM.

> 'He does much who loves much; he does much who does well; he does well who seeks the good of others rather than his own."
>
> *Thomas à Kempis.*

AFTER leaving Mr. Wesley, William White returned to Reading, and, greatly daring, set up on his own account as a printer, though on a very modest scale. For this purpose he took a little shop in London Street not far from his father, and there set type, wielded mallet and "shooting stick", inked his "forme" with a hand roller, and pulled the impressions from the press with his own hands.

A few copies are still in existence of a "History and Description of the Town of Reading," a most interesting little volume written and beautifully illustrated by his brother John White, printed by William White (the imprint bears date 1841), and the sheets folded by their sister Anne, afterwards Mrs. Cornelius

Pike. The book is most carefully and neatly printed, and was evidently a labour of love on the part of every member of the family concerned, but we are afraid the results were not always so satisfactory; the young printer had to do the best he could with a very small stock of type, and anything but an up-to-date establishment, and ill health finally forced him to give up the business altogether, but the experience gained was probably valuable to him in after years and some of the friendships made at this time were to last all his life.

In 1841 George Palmer came to Reading to enter into partnership with Thomas Huntley, and so founded the now world-famous business of "Huntley and Palmers". He, and more especially his brother William Isaac Palmer, were life-long friends of William White, who formed other close ties among the group of Quakers whom he met and worked with in the cause of Temperance and in the Sunday School in Silver Street. Many young friends came to help; among them Joseph Huntley and Thomas and Alfred Gregory with their sisters. The Silver Street School was flourishing when George Palmer began to teach in it, and he afterwards became Superintendent. His brother, William Isaac Palmer, was also an enthusiastic teacher.

It is a curious fact that throughout his long life William White had scarcely any minor illnesses, but in his youth he had three serious attacks of what

appears to have been a form of heart disease. He experienced the first when he was in his sixteenth year, and a second compelled him to give up his business at Reading, and for a whole year he was nursed by his devoted sister Anne at their father's home. During this time he was quite unable to walk, so was wheeled about in a bath-chair, sometimes being able thus to join little pleasure parties of his friends, when he was always, with his jokes and stories, the brightest and merriest of the party.

There is still in existence, carefully treasured by his sister, a book written and illustrated by him to beguile the long tedium of this illness, describing with the utmost care and realistic detail, worthy of Defoe himself, the towns and cities, harbours and rivers, commerce and population, etc., etc., of an entirely imaginary country. The illustrations are finished in a manner that would not have done discredit to many a steel engraver, and it is easy to trace, in the accounts of the various municipal institutions of these cities of his imagination, the beginning of that interest in public affairs which led him in later years to a life of such wide usefulness.

It was a hard school, but the scholar was apt and learnt once for all the lesson of sympathy with suffering and distress, and gained thereby a great power to win the hearts of those whom he sought to aid and uplift.

Gradually, the illness left him, and, in the autumn of 1843, he again went to Burton, and for three years was the right-hand man of his old employer William Wesley. At this time he joined the Society of Friends, feeling that, for him, the Quaker mode of worship, and absence of ordinances, approached nearer to the teaching of the New Testament than that of any other denomination. Although his father and mother and one of his sisters attended Meeting, and were practically Friends to the end of their lives, no other member of his family ever actually joined the Society. Throughout his life he was an ever loved and valued member amongst Friends, and would permit no other engagements to interfere with his regular attendance at their meetings, on First Day or in the middle of the week, and the cheerful willingness with which at all times he accepted and performed any routine work which the Society laid upon him, was often a lesson and a rebuke to younger and more leisured Friends.

His old friend Joseph Bevan Braithwaite recalls meeting him for the first time at a large public meeting at Burton in 1846. One or more of the brewers were present, and, though this meeting was probably one "in the love of the Gospel" and not directly connected with Temperance, it is noteworthy that Michael Bass, the famous brewer, supported William White in his Temperance work, "being pained at the

inroads made by drunkenness among his work-people."

During his stay in Burton, William White first became acquainted with his future brother-in-law and partner, Cornelius Gregory Pike, who, some six years his junior, was an apprentice with Mr. Wesley. The two young men soon grew close and attached friends, shared the same bedroom, and, in their leisure time, frequently took long walks into the country together. They had many aims and interests in common, and were, to quote William White's own words, "dear and inseparable companions for nearly 25 years, with an ever increasing love for each other."

After leaving Burton he spent a few months at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and, at the end of 1846, entered the employment of the late Arthur Wallis at Brighton. He was not there, however, for more than a year, for at the end of the time he had a repetition of the fainting seizures from which he had twice before suffered. His sister Anne hurried to Brighton to nurse him, and remained with him at his lodgings until he was able to be moved to Reading. The journey was a very trying one for both nurse and invalid, for in addition to the discomfort of railway travelling in the Forties there had been a fall of earth in a tunnel on the previous day, and William White had to be carried over the obstruction to a train at the other end.

His stay at Brighton was long enough to make him much beloved in the small circle of Friends

there, as the following letter, written by one of them more than fifty years later, shews:—

"I could hardly have thought the time he spent here was limited to two years. But that was long enough for him to make a lively impression on those who were privileged to know him. Certainly he was much interested in Temperance work, and at a time when it was not popular and the meetings were often held in little out-of-the-way upper rooms. There he was sure to be seen, and if he came into the room after the meeting was gathered, there would be calls for 'the White man,' showing that he already had acquired that winning way and readiness of speech which gave him an influence over men. I wish I could recall the amusing stories which he used to tell, as we sat round the fire at home, of his life at Burton-on-Trent, and the way in which he had overcome opposition to the cause of Temperance in a place where ale and beer were so in the ascendant. He had evidently begun his life work very early. On one of his visits to Brighton in later years he commenced his address in the First-day meeting with the words 'I was a stranger and ye took Me in, I was sick and ye visited Me,' referring to his life in Brighton."

His employer, Arthur Wallis, relinquished business in 1848, so that William White did not return to

Brighton; but he and Cornelius Pike resolved to go into business together, if a suitable one could be found, and very prayerfully did they seek for guidance in this, as in less important matters.

Writing to him from Burton with regard to their proposed partnership, Cornelius Pike says:—

> "The very thought that a Christian feels himself immortal is, or ought to be, sufficient to carry him above the cares and vexations of this life and to be constantly refreshing him. What an inconceivable expression! 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.' Is the man who feels this likely to be cast down by adverse circumstances?"

Neither of them wished to become wealthy men but rather sought that, wherever their business might be situated, they might find opportunities for the service of the Master Whom they had learned to love.

Among the little group of Friends with whom William White had been associated in Reading, was John Heath, an apprentice from Birmingham, whose pens are now known wherever pens are used, then learning the ironmongery trade in the business of Joseph Huntley. He suggested that William White should come down to Birmingham to enquire about a small bookselling and stationery business then carried on by Henry Newman in Bull Street.

Neither of the partners had much capital and it was impossible for them to pay immediate cash,

even for a very small business, but they brought the very highest testimonials as to their ability and integrity, (though no one seems to have offered to lend them money), and the purchase was concluded in September 1848. It was a hard struggle for a year or two and both the young men worked early and late and lived most sparingly, but, as each quarterly instalment became due, they always managed to make payment until the business was entirely their own.

The premises of White and Pike were situated in Bull Street, a little below the shop of T. & W. & W. Southall, while over the way John Cadbury sold tea and coffee, in the days when Cadbury's Cocoa was almost unknown. Over their shop was a room in which was kept the library belonging to the Birmingham Friends' Reading Society, and their office was quite a meeting-place for Members of the Society of Friends.

On taking over the business they added a printing-press, and gradually relinquished book-selling. At that time the printers in Birmingham could probably have been counted on the fingers of two hands, but, although competition was not very keen, neither was the amount of work to be done in the town very great, and the two partners began to look for some "special line" by means of which their business might be developed.

The firm of Huntley and Palmers had already

gained a considerable reputation for their biscuits, and William White suggested to his friends, George and William Isaac Palmer, that they should use a coloured label for their tins. The suggestion was adopted, and the first label (in two colours) was designed by Cornelius Pike, and for more than fifty years Huntley and Palmers' biscuit labels, at first by thousands and finally by millions, were regularly printed by the firm. This, led to work for other customers, and White and Pike gradually won a repute for "colour-printing from metal blocks" second to none in Great Britain.

The shop in Bull Street saw the first small beginnings of another and still more famous firm, now known the world over as "Tangyes, Limited." The story may be told in Sir Richard Tangye's own words:—

"The first time I saw William White was at a meeting of young people held under the hospitable roof of the late Edmund Sturge in Wheeley's Lane. I had but recently arrived in Birmingham and was known to very few. I had not been long seated before a kindly-faced Friend came and put his hand on my head, and said, 'And who is this fair-headed youth?' (My hair *was* fair hair then.) This was William White, and I was at once attracted to him. Very soon after he brought me to Severn Street School, where I became Librarian and Teacher

of the writing class. As time went on he continued his friendly interest in me, and when, in 1856, I determined to try my fortune in business I told William White what I proposed to do. He at once volunteered the use of a desk in his bookseller's shop, No. 14, Bull Street, and permitted me to have all my correspondence addressed there. This continued until one day my friend's partner, the late Cornelius Pike, observed to me that my letters were now more than theirs, and that consequently one of us would have to move. I thought it unreasonable to ask them to move and so cast about for another address."

Many were the amusing anecdotes that William White could recall about his early experience in Bull Street. On a dark shelf by the cellar stairs stood a small barrel of ink with a tin mug hanging under the spigot to catch any leaking drops. One day a workman engaged in some little repairs espied the barrel, which to his mind could only mean one thing, and took a drink. The taste was clearly not pleasant and resulted in much "language," which was, however, quickly suppressed on the arrival of his mate, whom, also, he persuaded to have a taste of the brew. Tableau!!

In those days, before the advent of the School Boards, it was no uncommon thing for a blushing servant lass or burly carter to come into the shop

with a request that Mr. White would write a letter for them, generally to a member of the opposite sex, and his ready sympathy and fertile imagination would often recall or invent a few lines of doggerel verse suited to the occasion. He used to say that the letters always gave great satisfaction, and it certainly seems a pity that the undoubted talent which he possessed in this direction was never put to any personal use so far as he himself was concerned.

In 1850 his sister Anne was married to Cornelius Pike, and the three kept house together, first in Bull Street and afterwards in Edgbaston. Their house had no garden at the back, though John Cadbury was still able to grow gooseberries in the garden behind his shop almost opposite them. The brothers erected a little glass fernery outside the sitting-room window, so that they might enjoy the sight of something pleasanter than bricks and mortar. At first the ferns did not flourish, as they received too much of the partly vitiated air of the house, but a friend skilled in such matters was consulted and the disease was quickly diagnosed and cured. The little fernery fostered the intense love for gardening which was a striking characteristic of William White in after life. The first few years of business were times of hard work for both partners, and the experience gained was often referred to in later years when giving wise and kindly counsel to young men thinking of starting business on their own account.

About 1861 the firm moved into much larger premises, known as "Commercial Buildings," in Crooked Lane, a curious winding thoroughfare, now almost obliterated, between Bull Street and Union Passage. Here they put down a steam engine and also their first printing machines (as distinct from the old hand-presses). The building occupied by them was on the site of Cadbury's first Cocoa Works, which had been pulled down when the Great Western Railway made their tunnel under Birmingham in 1851. In addition to the colour-printing trade the firm took over a very useful little Time Table, first published by Hidson and Ellis, but since widely known as "White and Pike's Railway Guide," which reached its 500th monthly number in October, 1902.

William White was always proud of the Guide, and would often say with undisguised complacency, "the porters at New Street Station always refer to 'White and Pike' when they have to look up a train."

Members of the Society of Friends would now hardly know how to get on without their "List of Members." When William White was Clerk of Birmingham Preparative Meeting, late in the "Fifties," he saw what a convenience it would be to have a printed list of the names and addresses of Friends in the Meeting, and for some years he printed and circulated such a list at his own

expense, despite opposition from old-fashioned Friends, who objected to the "numbering of Israel." This was the first of the kind in the country. After awhile the idea was taken up officially and, before long, Quarterly Meetings in other parts of the country began to come to White and Pike to get their "list of members" printed.

The gift of human sympathy, which also gave him such a power in the Adult School, made him a very popular employer, and, up to a time when his work-people might be counted by hundreds, he was personally acquainted with every employé of the firm and with not a few of their personal joys and sorrows.

William White and Cornelius Pike lived most harmoniously in all their relations with each other. With similar aims in life, and each striving after a high standard of business morality, the longer they worked together the deeper grew their mutual love and esteem. The high reputation they had attained for their colour-printing would have made it easy for them very largely to increase their business by printing show-cards and labels for the great brewing firms of Burton and elsewhere; but the partners were at one in thinking that they could not conscientiously profit, even indirectly, by the drink traffic, the evils of which they both so abhorred, and such work was never undertaken by the firm.

In 1869 Cornelius Pike died, after a period of

ill-health extending over some three or four years, and the shadow of a great sorrow rested on William White's life. But this was tempered by the joy of his loving service as an ever ready stay and protection to his widowed sister and a second father to her fatherless sons.

Writing of his brother-in-law shortly after his death, he says:—

"Cornelius was a true-hearted sympathiser in the trials and difficulties of others. I can testify how often he has helped to smooth my path, and how truly tender and brotherly his care of me has been in times of sorrow and during my illness. In the latter years of his life, while himself under great weakness of body, and in consequence often compelled to think more of his own necessities, this thoughtful care for others continued without abatement.

"I trust that we may be stimulated afresh to follow him as he followed Christ, and with a 'hope full of immortality,' we may more faithfully perform life's duties, and in the end rejoin him and so many more whom we have deeply loved on earth, in the Kingdom of rest and peace, prepared for all those who love the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

In 1871 William White took a partner, and the business was transferred to Moor Street, where for a quarter of a century it grew and prospered.

Ill-advised extensions, however, after the firm had been converted into a limited liability company, led to commercial disaster, which much saddened his last days. Though his many public and private engagements prevented him from taking a very active part in the business for some twenty years before his death, his interest in all that related thereto continued unabated, and he rarely missed joining the senior clerks round the tea-table for half-an-hour every afternoon. On these occasions he always presided at the urn and joined in and enlivened the conversation with a wonderful store of jokes and anecdotes.

Photo by S. Victor White, Reading.

WILLIAM WHITE, ÆT. 50.

CHAPTER III.

SEVERN STREET SCHOOLS.

"The fair record of his life
Can ne'er be blotted out, and gazing on
His memory, shining through the coming years,
We shall draw fresher force to serve the cause
He served, and shew our love as he shewed his.
Who would not followers be, in such a field,
Of such a chief, so worthily beloved,
So much revered, so deeply mourned as he?"

Dawson Burns.

THE one work in connection with which the name of William White will be for ever held in honour, the work which lay nearest to his heart and which largely occupied more than 50 years of his life was the First-day Early Morning School Movement. The first Early Morning School for Adults was started by some Friends at Nottingham early in the century, but it was to the Severn Street School that the movement owed its greatest impetus, and William White (although not the founder) will always be looked upon as the father of Adult Schools all over the country.

The story of Severn Street and Priory Schools has been well written by William White himself, though the book has one great fault (natural under the circumstances), for the Author, in his modesty, never refers to his own share and part in the work.

In coming to Birmingham, both he and his partner had been actuated by an earnest desire to follow what they believed to be the Divine guidance. They sought, not only an opening for their business activities, but a sphere of usefulness and service. The loving tact with which William White had gained an influence over the rough boys in the Reading Sunday School, and the ardour with which he had given himself for work in the Temperance cause at Burton and Brighton had shewn the nature of the man, thinking little of himself, much of his neighbour, ready to spend and be spent in the Master's service. Unselfishness was the essence of his life; in that lay his power to enter into the lives of his fellow-men, to make their joys his joys, and to sorrow with them in their griefs. He gave them freely of his time, his strength and all that he possessed, if so be that he might brighten some cheerless lives, might waken the spirit in some house of clay, might lead men out of the slough to the firm ground of hope and faith, and might turn their thoughts to the things of truth, of honour and of good report, of purity and praise.

The Severn Street Schools had been started in

October, 1845, at the suggestion of the late Joseph Sturge, and the hand-bill announcing the coming event contained the following invitation:—

> "A School is intended to be held on First-day (Sunday) evenings, from 6 to 8 o'clock, at the British School Rooms in Severn Street, chiefly for the purpose of affording instruction in reading the Scriptures, and in writing, to youths and young men from 14 years of age and upwards, who are invited to attend. The School to commence on the 12th of 10th month, 1845."

At the very outset the new movement met with somewhat unexpected, though possibly healthy, opposition. In a copy of *The Pilot* for Nov. 15, 1845, we find the editor, in an article headed "The Popery of Protestantism," vigorously defending the founders of the School against the attack of the Rev. Mr. Bird, Rector of St. Thomas' (in which parish Severn Street is situated), who complained in very strong terms to the Committee of the British School Society of the conduct of the "Friends," in teaching the destitute youths entrusted to their care to *write* as well as to *read* on the Sunday. In the course of a somewhat lengthy letter of defence written by one of the Teachers and published in *The Pilot*, the writer very aptly quotes the words of our Lord: "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath," and continues:

"Is it not as much a 'work' for a clergyman to read or write, or speak a sermon on a Sunday, as it is

for a poor boy to read, write, or speak passages of Scripture on the same day? and which is the more 'secular' or worldly, to be *paid for preaching*, or to *learn gratuitously?*

"In conclusion, permit me to add, that I do not recognise the right of any clergyman to exercise the smallest degree of spiritual or temporal authority or control over those who do not belong to his flock; and his anathemas might, perhaps, with quite as much propriety be directed to those who compel their servants to clean horses and carriages on Sundays, in order that their owners may enjoy the luxury of riding to and from Church, as to such as are engaged in the occupation of

A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER."

In the summer of 1846 the hour of meeting was changed to 7-30 in the morning; the numbers rapidly grew, and in 1848 the average attendance of Scholars had risen to 186.

In this latter year William White visited Birmingham on business and spent a First-day there. After dining with Charles Sturge, he called on Joseph Sturge at his house in Wheeley's Road; and when, a few weeks afterwards, he came to live in Birmingham, it was Joseph Sturge who invited him and Cornelius Pike to meet the Severn Street Teachers at breakfast on Sunday morning. From thence onward his whole life seemed bound up in the work of the Adult Schools. The erection and subsequent enlargement of the huge New Street

Railway Station, and the acquiring of many acres of land for goods sidings by the Midland Railway Company has much reduced the population near Severn Street, but fifty years ago the district was densely populated and covered with a labyrinth of small streets and lanes, slums of the very worst description. The "Lancastrian" School in Severn Street was built in 1809, and was under the care of a committee partly composed of Friends, and the use of the school-room, a huge box-like room, still used for the junior division of the Severn Street Schools, was obtained. In a very short time it was found that men, as well as youths, were anxious to avail themselves of the chances of learning to read or write that the school offered, and a Friend undertook to form a class of adults, which met in a little room at the end of the building. This was the small beginning of No. 1 Class which William White joined as teacher on his arrival in Birmingham in 1848.

There was no caretaker (except a four-footed one) on the premises, but one of the minutes of an early Quarterly Teachers' Meeting, held at Joseph Sturge's house, authorizes the purchase of a kennel for the dog.

The Teachers met at 7-0 a.m. and breakfasted together in a tenement house on the site of the present cheerful Breakfast Room to the right of the entrance.

The Sixth Annual Report (1851) of the School gives some rather interesting details. The first paragraph calling attention to the "generally suitable behaviour of the Scholars, many of whom are of a class and at an age (all above 14) very difficult of control" reads curiously to an Adult School man of to-day. The average attendance is then given as 158, "which was also the average attendance of the previous three years." The amount in the steadily increasing Savings Fund is stated as £147 3s. 3d,. and interest was given by two Friends, probably Joseph and Charles Sturge, on all sums remaining in the Fund at the end of the year. The rate of interest would probably prove an inducement to investors from far and near to join the School if offered at the present day.

On sums deposited in the		1st quarter,		2/9	in the Pound.
"	"	2nd	"	1/3	"
"	"	3rd	"	9d.	"
"	"	4th	"	3d.	"

A paragraph on Temperance work among the Scholars gives the number of teetotalers as 58 out of 180 present on one occasion.

"The average number of Teachers on the list has been twenty and their attendance sixteen; which is a higher average than might have been expected, considering the very late hours some of them are occupied the previous evening, and the early hour the School commences."

These were the days long before Saturday Half-Holidays were dreamed of, but we may be certain that William White was always punctual at School however late he might have been at work on the evening before. This trait of punctuality was undoubtedly one of the many that contributed to his success as an Adult School teacher. Nothing save illness, or absence from home, would keep him from School, and he was never late; but he always arrived in time for a few minutes chat with his friends before breakfast. No one who experienced it, will ever forget the task of struggling through a foot of newly-fallen snow one Sunday morning in the winter of 1898, nor their wonder at the pluck and perseverance of the old man of 78, who faced the two-mile walk to School, and sat down to the breakfast table punctually at 7-0 o'clock.

And as he was in old age, so also in his youth, always punctual, always willing to devote any amount of time to visiting absent scholars, to cheering the sick and making each and every member of the Class feel that in William White they had a personal friend who would do anything in his power to help them in whatever direction help was needed. How his Scholars loved him for his love and sympathy! How they looked up to him (not without cause) as a living encyclopædia of useful knowledge on all manner of topics! Without, perhaps, profound learning on any one subject he

had a vast range of miscellaneous knowledge and a wonderful gift of imparting it to his hearers without ever making them feel that they were being lectured or bored. He knew something of the author of every hymn in the Class hymn book, having a great love for the "classics" of English hymnology, especially Dr. Watts, and he could name the tune for each, and, if necessary, start it. That marvellous memory of his enabled him, even when an old man, to recall the names and peculiarities of every tradesman on each side of London Street, Reading, in the time of his boyhood; and his fund of personal anecdote of men he had known was simply inexhaustible. Then his short addresses to the Class at the "Monthly Meetings" would touch in the most fascinating manner on the most varied topics: *e.g.*, astronomy, gardening (there his knowledge *was* wide), municipal politics, hygiene, Switzerland, etc.

With such a leader it is no wonder that Class I.,—and with it the whole of the School,—grew and prospered.

The Fifth Annual Report of the Class, the first one to be printed, read at the Annual Meeting, October 28th, 1856, is signed by the Treasurer, Librarian, and Secretary. All are still living (1902), and two of them are even yet members of the Class*—a record which it would probably be hard to beat. The number in the Class was then sixty,

* One has since died.

which was about the number that the room could conveniently hold. Twelve meetings had been held during the year for lectures and discussions, including two "Lectures on the Almanac Calendar" by William White, and two "Evenings devoted to the Practice of Letter Writing" also under his superintendence.

In the following year their Teacher's versatility was further shewn by his giving two "very interesting" Lectures on *Domestic Economy*. We are told that these were especially appreciated by "our female friends," who were this year for the first time admitted to the lectures.

He was not afraid of emphasising a point in a lesson by a joke or a little dry humour, and never a point so made was lost to his hearers. The manuscript notes of one of his lessons on "Stupidity" illustrate both this, and the practical nature of his talks to his Scholars. Warnings against Intemperance or Gambling lost none of their force from the fact that he knew only too well how such a one amongst his audience was striving against the power of strong drink and how another was in constant danger from the allurements of the bookmaker.

After quoting Psalm xiv., 1-3, and various other passages, he gets down to the follies of everyday life as shewn in the following notes:—

Stupid to expect children to be good-tempered when we are ill-tempered ourselves—smacks, thumps, blowings up.

Stupid to be in such a frame of mind as is described as "getting out of bed the wrong way." Miserable themselves and making others miserable.

Stupid to be unforgiving. It all means pride. The wise will let their anger cool.

Stupid for a young fellow to marry before he has saved a penny and go to live with his mother-in-law. ("Marry in haste.") Stupider still for him to keep company with the impure and profane.

Stupid in the face of science and facts to say that beer or other intoxicating drink is necessary to enable a man to do his work. Speak the truth and say "I like it."

Stupid to think it is needful or healthful to drink at all between meals.

Stupid to feed and clothe the landlord's wife and children while your own are in rags.

Stupid to help to build gin palaces and live in houses yourselves that won't keep out the wind and rain.

Stupid to argue about the burden of taxation when you can repeal most of it without going to Parliament. Taxed twice as much by idleness, drink, and extravagance.

No material was too rough or unpromising in his eyes for the making of a "Christian Gentleman" through the Adult School, and his homely lesson on "Good Manners" was one of the means taken by him for the accomplishment of this object. The

notes are too long to give in full, so extracts must serve:—

Good behaviour—What it means—Finish, polish of character. Every good workman likes good work.

Good manners at work! So often forgot. Who's he? Honour all men.

Good manners in the street. Don't spit on the pavement. Don't push women and children aside to crush into a tram-car. Don't gossip in the middle of the pavement.

Good manners at School:—Don't gossip when a teacher is speaking. If he isn't lively enough ask him a good, telling question, to quicken him up and sharpen his wits.

Good manners at Tea Meetings:—See that everybody else is served as well as yourself. Don't send your cup to be filled with the spoon sticking up or take half-a-dozen pieces of cake at once.

Christ's politeness our Model.

Pleased not Himself—Blessed are the meek—Washed His disciples' feet. The perfect temper is that of the Lord Jesus.

His great hold on the regard and affection of his Scholars, and his power to mould their lives and characters, lay not in eloquence of words, nor skill in teaching, but rested on human love, so near akin to the Divine, on the absolute confidence which the members of the Class had that their teacher's life more than matched his

words; and that the character of the Master Whom he served was shewn forth as much in his life as in his teaching.

> "Through such souls alone
> God, stooping, shows sufficient of His light
> For us i' the dark to rise by."

In 1862 the Annual Meeting of the Class; to which gathering the wives and "female friends" of Scholars are always invited; was held for the first time on Shrove Tuesday, and for 40 years "Pancake Day" has always been synonymous with the Class Annual Meeting in the minds of its members. In the Report for 1862 we are told

> "Our dear friend and teacher, Mr. White, being encouraged by the good use that was made of the old Hymn Book, has, during the past year, brought out a new edition, containing, with the old, many new hymns. We trust it may be of use to the Scholars at home as well as at School."

Since then several editions of the "Class I. Hymn Book" have been published, each carefully revised by William White, with a few new hymns added from time to time. But his taste in hymns and music was conservative in the best sense, and he could not bear the empty jingle of the tunes and the oft-repeated choruses of many popular modern hymns. He liked all simple Gospel hymns, and specially avoided using sensational ones, choosing

for public singing hymns of adoration, praise, or thanksgiving, such as could truly be prefaced with the invitation "Let us sing to the praise and glory of God." For reading in the family circle, he would choose hymns of prayer, and those on consolation, sympathy, guidance, trust in God, and the beauties of nature. It was always a great enjoyment to him to hear some of Wesley's beautiful hymns sung to the well-remembered words and tunes of his early days; and when he came home in the evening rather tired, he would sometimes say to his sister, who shared his taste in these things, "how I should like thee to read to me some of thy favourite hymns," and it was a source of real enjoyment to both of them. On one occasion he was the principal speaker at a meeting in the Rev. F. B. Meyer's Church (Christ Church, Westminster), and was asked by the secretary, "do you know this hymn?" (naming one from Moody and Sankey's book) "Only too well," replied William White, and another was substituted.

Except for his brief summer holiday on the Continent, and, very rarely, for illness, nothing but absence on Adult School work elsewhere would keep him from his beloved Class on First-Day mornings, and when away he never failed to write a letter of love and kindly counsel to the Scholars of his Class. Nearly all the early letters have unfortunately been destroyed, and others will be quoted

later in this volume; but two, the oldest extant, and the last of all written by him, may fitly be given here, beautifully illustrating as they do the loving bonds that united Teacher and Class almost as father and children.

Birmingham, 30th 12th Month, 1854.

My Dear Friends,

I am anxious, according to my promise, to write a few lines to you before the year closes. I am very much pleased with the many interesting letters I have received from you lately, and through the year, and am glad to notice, in not a few, a great improvement both in spelling and writing. Greatly do I desire for you in return the same blessings and good wishes you have expressed on my behalf.

We have come nearly to the close of another year! How fast time flies!

> "Time, like an ever rolling stream,
> Bears all its sons away."

Yet how many blessings and how much peace and comfort we have enjoyed. How has a gracious Providence watched over us for good; while thousands have fallen by the pestilence, or in a still more dreadful manner on the battle-field, we have, most of us, been favoured with good health, and to close the year in comfort, and in the enjoyment of numerous blessings and privileges. Does not this call for thankfulness in every one of us? May we not all unite in saying "O, give thanks unto the Lord for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever." (Psalm cxviii., 29). Now

the more, my beloved friends, that we can feel of gratitude to our Maker, the happier we shall be in the coming year. This is a feeling which should never die in our hearts; and not only with our lips, but in our daily lives, should we show forth His goodness, especially when we remember that *all* we have comes from Him. Truly "the Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works." (Psalm cxiv., 19.)

It is very encouraging to my mind to witness the improvement of many of you in various branches of useful knowledge. "The wise man" has said, "for the soul to be without knowledge is not good" (Proverbs xix., 2), and it is pleasant to think that some of you have felt the force of this proverb, and are endeavouring, in various ways, to improve the mind. You will be much helped in this by a very careful reading of the many useful books your Library contains. Let us, again, hear the words of Scripture on this subject: "A wise man will hear and will increase learning, and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels." (Proverbs 1., 5.) But let us at the same time remember that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1., 7), and that without this fear, and God's heavenly blessing, our work will be in vain.

And now that we are about entering upon another year, let us all resolve that we will endeavour to walk in the path of duty more than we have ever yet done, knowing that it is the only path of safety.

"In all our intercourse below,
Let us in Jesus' footsteps go."

Let us strive to live in quietude and contentment, to

be partakers of grace, mercy, and peace. O! let us be peacemakers under all circumstances. We have need often to remember "that a soft answer turneth away wrath," and that love and kindness will melt the heart better than hard words or blows.

> "By kindness angry hearts are riven,
> Forgive and thou shalt be forgiven."

This is the way to conquer our enemies, and to promote peace on earth. We must also be in unity amongst ourselves, and endeavour to be the companions of the humble, visitors of the sick, supporters of the weak, friends of the friendless, and lovers of all men. By temperance, soberness, honesty, purity in word and deed, and true humility, may our conduct be a pattern to others, leading them to acknowledge that "the path of the just is as the shining light." All these virtues may be ours if we obey the inward voice of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and seek diligently in the Holy Scriptures for a true understanding of all He has done for our glory and happiness.

Finally, my dear friends, let us all learn to think, act, and converse only in a way that will tend to good. It will be a greater honour to "fear God and keep His commandments," than to gain either vast riches or become great or mighty men in the world. The riches and greatness of this world soon pass away; but "he that doeth the will of God shall abide for ever." Let us, then, love Him, and exhibit our gratitude by endeavouring, on all occasions, to do His will,

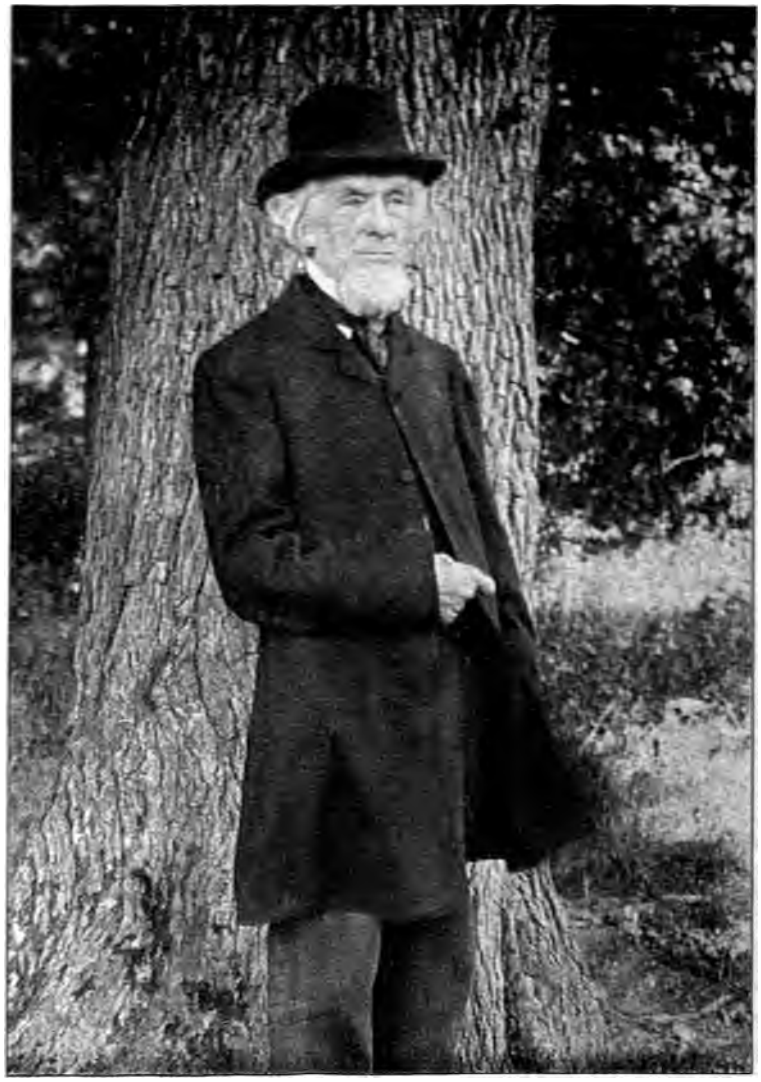

Photo by Pope, Birmingham.

WILLIAM WHITE.

PHOTO TAKEN ON CLASS EXCURSION TO BRIDGNORTH.

remembering His promise, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

"Join we then our hearts and hands,
Each to love provoke his friend,
Run the way of God's commands,
And keep them to the end."

Wishing you all a "happy new year,"

I remain, affectionately your friend,

WILLIAM WHITE.

SIR HARRY'S ROAD,

July 20th, 1900.

I promised our Secretary that as I expected to be away from home on First-day I would send you a few lines.

When I look on your kind faces from week to week, I often say to myself, why do these people come here? I often wish I could tell what you are thinking about; what you want to know; and what brought so many of you to school long years ago and what has kept you there? Then why do new Scholars come, and do they get what they hope by coming? And then I feel how little I can answer these questions, how little I know of your thoughts and feelings.

Then sometimes the thought springs up in my mind that God knows all about us. That He knows every-everything that can be known—everything that ever has been or that will be. But though He is so wise and so great He calls us His sons and teaches us to call Him Father, and it pleases Him when we want to know more from week to week of His wonderful works, and above all of His love shown to us in Jesus Christ.

When God created things He had no plan, no model. How well the Psalmist expresses it, "He formed all things by the breath of His power," as we sometimes sing to Him in one of our hymns:—

"Infinite strength and equal skill
Shine thro' Thy works abroad;
Our souls with vast amazement fill
And speak the Builder—God."

None told Him that fire would give out light and heat. No one told Him that water would put out fire. Our Father knew all this beforehand. He gave us fire and taught us how to use it. He gave us water as our best and safest drink and as a means of beautifying and fertilising the earth. He knew that the air would be good to breathe, good to make everything live, from the richest fruit to the humblest flower.

Our eyes let in the light, and the pictures of houses and trees, and every beautiful thing we see, into the soul, but no eye had ever seen when God created it. Our ears have curious little chambers so that we can hear kind words and sweet sounds, but no ear had ever been seen when He made the ear of Adam. So if God could thus make the heavens and the earth, the sea and all things, and feed and clothe all, how gladly we should always sing—

"His sovereign power without our aid
Made us of clay and form'd us men."

What a pleasant thought, "However little others may care for me God cares for me. However little others may know me God knows me." So let us join in the words of the 139th Psalm, and thankfully say, "O Lord

Thou hast searched me and known me . . . Thou understandest my thought afar off . . . and art acquainted with all my ways."

You will see, my dear friends, that I have tried as much as I could in this letter to use the shortest and simplest words.

John Bright used to say, "never use a big word when a simpler and shorter one will give your meaning better."

I remain,

Affectionately your friend,

WILLIAM WHITE.

From this time forward for nearly 50 years the New Year's letter to his Class was never forgotten, and nearly 3,000 letters from Scholars to him shew how their Teacher was loved and remembered in return. From these letters, "a yard and a half thick," as William White used to say, it is impossible to give more than brief extracts, but they all show how completely he had won the affection and regard of the members of his Class, and many show how deep was the debt that writers owed him.

DEAR TEACHER,

Now I have been three years in your Class I think it is about time for me to write you a few lines to say how I am getting on. Three years ago I did not think I had a friend in the world. I was a miserable, dirty character, no work—though reckoned good at my trade; parted from my wife, following the drink and everything

that was bad and filthy. Then Joseph Beardsley, by God's blessing, picked me up, took me to his home, fed me, made me sign the pledge. I broke down in a month and thought it was all up with me but he followed me up and I have stood firm ever since.

Now what have I got? First peace with God, my wife back again after being parted over two years, a nice home, some nice books, and a hundred friends in our dear Class, and a little nest egg in our savings fund. I am back in my old place of work, and I am sure my employer respects me now I try to respect myself.

It seems when I think about it too good to be true. Dear teacher, pray to God that I may keep in the right way, the way that leads to Him at last.

The following letters are from one of William White's chief henchmen in his work, Joseph Beardsley, foremost among the many who were by the grace of God saved through the Severn Street Schools to be a power to turn many to righteousness.

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I take the opportunity of writing to you hoping that you are better, from the letter I heard read last Sunday morning stating the cause of your absence and I was very sorry to hear that it was illness. But I hope I shall soon see you at School again. May God Bless us all for Jesus' sake. Amen.

JOSEPH BEARDSLEY.

DEAR TEACHER,

With feelings of great joy and thanks to Almighty God that I am spared to pen these few lines after a long absence from School through ill-health, but thanks be to Him who rules everything that I am again enabled to return to my Class, and I hope, please God, that my health will be more pleasant through the coming year than that of the past, and though my illness has been one of pain and suffering I hope that it has been the means of bringing me nearer to my God and Maker. Dear Teacher, my earnest prayer is that all who are engaged as Teachers and Scholars of this large and important School may be the means of converting souls unto Jesus through His Holy Name and Word, for our beloved First-day School has been the means, in God's hands, of bringing souls to Jesus; and almost in the same words as I said before I hope it will still be more prosperous in the coming year.

In evil long I took delight,
Unawed by shame and fear,
Till a new object met my sight
And stopped my wild career.
With pleasing grief and mournful joy
My spirit now is filled,
That I should such a life destroy
Yet live by Him I killed.

Dear Sir, I remain, your ever Obedient Scholar,

J. BEARDSLEY.

The next is from a Scholar named James Cummings, like Joseph Beardsley, once a prize-fighter, but then, despite of spelling, in the process of transformation to the "Christian Gentleman of Severn Street Schools."

OUR DEAR TEACHER,

I have taken the pleasuer to write to you Hoping that this letter might find you and all in your house quit well as we are quit well thank God for it.

A bout twelve Mounts a go I written A letter to you to show you how I could write But at that time I could not spell the words as I had other People to spell the words for me. So you see Dear teacher By this letter I have lost no time. I have composed this Letter my sealf so I think I have made Good progress in the time. But I have tended the Sundays morings throughout the year excep last Sunday moring, and all the Sunday night, and all the monthly metings so you see I have lost noting But gained much Knowledge by it. And for this knowledge we thank our Heavenly Father through Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

From yours affectionit Skeller, J. CUMMINGS.

Good night and God bless you all.

The two following letters are given in facsimile. Their new-found taste for scholarship had, at that time, evidently not carried the writers very far, but it was sufficient to mark the crossing of the dividing line between the mere brute and the *man* who aspires to higher things. The occasion on which the Scholars made "such good spaach" was evidently one of the Annual Christmas Morning Breakfasts, to which William White invited all the Members of his Class. They were memorable for the brief testimonies given by Scholar after Scholar of the good that they had received through coming to School.

December
25

Dear teacher. I right
to you: thinks be to God
that ever I come to Sod (School)
I Shood have like to have
Saide a few words But
my hart was to full of
Goy to hear my folow
Scolros make Such Good
Speach. I never Shall
for Get Christmas
moring. from what we
heardc let every farther
less his wife and Children

for I belive that ther
is Joy at tome may the
young be bless to Shound
his Cheldren a Good parth.
it is written in the prophets,
and they Shall be all taught
of God. every man therefore
that hath heard. and hath
learned of the father cometh
unto me. may God bless yo
for ever.

please to excuse
the right
Good night and God
bless yo Robert Gibson

December 15·1872

severn street first day
school first class dear
ther i wright to you
hoping to find you
well and your sister
well as it leves me
at this time thank
god for it i wright
to you to tell you
that i cood not
wright this to years
a go but i am very
glad that i can now
ihiam very glad

to tell you that
ihave gained a good
deil by goin and
ihave come ever sence
april 16 1871 ihave
never mist but onc
and ihave never bing
bind atall hit thank
god for it ihope
you well ixkuse me
and ihope i shall
be habel to right
beter another christmas

William Joynes

The following cheery letter requires no explanation :—

My Dear Teacher,

It is with pleasure that I received the books from you . . . you cannot think how one feels with my misfortune with broken leg and collar bone, one wonders there can be any sunshine in one at all . . . but I always remember your kind words "there is nothing so bad but it might be worse," and I think of the man that praised God with a broken leg and parish pay, for there might be two broken legs and no parish pay . . . I think with all my troubles I have great cause to be thankful to Almighty God for his goodness to me and mine. . . .

I remain,

Your affectionate Scholar,

A letter, from a member of a School some little distance from Birmingham, shews eccentricities of spelling in the original which are almost beyond conception. Since the date of the letter the writer has probably improved in that respect, and has certainly been the means of helping many others to good things similar to those he so graphically describes.

Dear Brother and Friend,

I have had it boxed up in my mind for a long time I should like to write a few lines to you, hoping this will find you in good health for that is what we want. I cannot tell you how much I owe you and your

Brotherhood for starting the Adult School. It has been the making of me. My home is better, my wife brighter, children happier, self is as happy as a king, for I am one of the King's sons and mean to take my post as long as God will employ me. I shall fight for my God in spite of the Devil's agents. The thicker the storm the better the battle. I have been in God's service for six years; it is the best time of my life. I could not read nor write but can do both now. I have took 138 men to the School, and hope to take as many more if God wills. . . . I can remember when I had four children, no food, no firing, no clothes, no home worth calling home, now, bless God, I have got a fine house full of good things.

The foregoing are mostly from men who had only been for a very short time in Class I., and, while they are, for that very reason, perhaps the most interesting, they must not be taken as typical of a very large proportion of the "love letters" received by William White, which were from Scholars who had long since gained a knowledge of grammar, but with their acquired polish had not ceased to love their old School and their teacher.

Dear Teacher and Friend,

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in trying to benefit my fellow men and to teach them to love the Lord Jesus Christ and to follow in His footsteps. Last Tuesday evening I invited the scholars of my section to my house for supper, which they all accepted, and a very pleasant evening we spent. Most of them said that coming to school had been the happiest time in their lives; one said, "I have not learnt to read much but I am a better man in every way"; another said, "I was the biggest drunkard in the town but now, thank God, I have a good home now, and it is Severn Street School that has done it for me." With such testimony as this it is very encouraging to go on in the good work which is given us to do as elementary teachers. May our School go on and prosper and grow in grace, that we may all meet in heaven at last, is the earnest prayer of your humble scholar.

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un-Christlike to accept any of the blessings of our lives, temporal or spiritual, without a desire to share them with others, and that for this sharing one needs continually to look for Divine guidance, asking the question, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' and then, when we believe we have an answer, following patiently, humbly, and faithfully in the path marked out, unallured by any *world's* 'well done' that might lessen our desire for the Master's."

As soon as the affairs of his business permitted of fairly frequent absences from home, William White was in great request as a speaker at Adult School meetings all over the country. He used to say that he had addressed such meetings in every county in England with the exception of Rutland. Thousands of men from Tyneside to Cornwall looked upon him with scarcely less love and veneration than that of his own Scholars of Class I. His activity was as unbounded as his love. If he received an invitation to speak at a meeting of a School, however distant, his reply was always favourable to the request if he could possibly manage to go, and it was no unusual thing for him to be speaking at places hundreds of miles apart in the same week.

On June 7th, 1858, the Annual Trip of his Class took place to Bridgnorth. The arrangements were made by Mr. McMichael, a life-long friend of William

White, who welcomed the members of the Class to the beautiful little town on the Severn on many similar occasions. Mr. McMichael's interest in Severn Street continued up to the time of his death, 40 years later, and the woods at Apley Park will always be associated in the memories of members of the Class with his genial company, with the sound of the hymns and glees sung at his request, and with the evident pleasure that the two friends took in each other's society.

In those days, long before Public Free Libraries were dreamt of, the Adult School libraries filled a most useful place and were evidently much appreciated. In 1858, 900 books were issued to Scholars, and as the library only contained 200 volumes it is evident that many were very much in request. It is doubtful, however, if such books as "The Christian Philosopher Triumphing over Death," or Paley's "Natural Theology," were in great demand. Probably the kind friends who presented books to the School libraries were, even in 1848, rather apt to give such as they thought might be well spared from their own shelves.

For many years the room provided for Class I. was so small that the number of Scholars had to be limited to between sixty and seventy, and applicants for admission were asked to wait for weeks or even months before room could be found for them. In 1860, however, William White persuaded

some members of the Class, who had derived much personal benefit from their attendance at Severn Street, to undertake the formation of an elementary section composed of men who could neither read nor write. Room was found for the additional numbers, and the new section rapidly grew and became a permanent and most useful feature of the School. As the "elementary" Scholars learned to read, they were gradually drafted into the main sections taught by William White and his colleagues. The benefit to those who were thus persuaded to give out a little of what they themselves had gained was incalculable.

William White's care for his Class did not by any means confine itself to Sunday morning, but his time was occupied during many evenings in the week in visiting Scholars at their homes, and in attending the Monthly Meetings of the Class or meetings for "mutual improvement, etc., etc."

It is said that he knew personally, not only every member of his large Class, but also the wives and members of their families, and for a long time he made a point of visiting every Scholar at his home at least once a year. Welcome visits they were we may be sure, and many a story is still told of homes brightened and lives changed by his kindly sympathy and homely advice. His was the love that never failed, that thought no evil, that persevered to the end, and won many a victory over

natures which would have been repelled by the least stiffness or censoriousness.

In joy or sorrow he was always welcome, and always ready to share. It might only be a funeral of the little child of a Scholar, taking place far away from his business and on a busy afternoon, yet the sorrowing parents would be cheered by William White's presence and kindly words of sympathy and consolation. No wonder his Scholars loved him.

One of the first members of his Class, who has since many times repaid in loving service for others the debt that he owed to William White, tells how he came to Severn Street in wondrously ragged garments, including a "seedy silk waistcoat with brass buttons," and the Teacher met him with—"Why, my dear friend, how very badly the Devil has been using thee, he's almost stripped the clothes off thy back; have a good try and stop at School, let thee and me run a race together." And a good race they did run, Teacher and Scholar, William White and Frederick Beard, apostles of the Adult School Movement over the length and breadth of the land.

Another old Scholar who entered the School in 1854, and is still a most active member, after recalling how he had his name down as a candidate for two years before he was admitted to the Class, writes: "I was not long in the Class before he

to tell you that
ihave gained a good
deil by goin and
ihave come ever sence
april 16 1871 ihave
never mist but onc
and ihave never bing
bind atall hit thank
god for it ihope
you well ixkuse me
and ihope i shall
be habel to right
beter another christmas

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perhaps for the first time, as a subject of vital personal interest. Sometimes, but rarely, the Class would sit through the lesson and ask no questions or make any remarks, and William White would say, "what a lot of paupers." But, as a rule, he succeeded in drawing them out to take their part in the lesson. The General Lessons, which he gave from the desk to the whole Class at intervals of about six weeks, were always much looked forward to and valued by his Scholars; and many a man treasured up in his mind things which he had heard on these occasions. The choice of subjects was most varied, from a talk on the English language, or a short historical lecture, to a Temperance address, or a lesson on the life of the Apostle Paul.

The neat manuscript notes for these lessons show how carefully he prepared his subjects, though, of course, as time went on, a lesson might, very naturally, be intentionally repeated. The following are some of the notes for a lesson on "Taking Stock," a typical one for the New Year:—

"Everybody knows what taking stock means. Every wise man does this to know best or worst.

People who are earning a pound or thirty shillings a week do it, if they are sensible or thoughtful. Rent clothes—food—firing. Young man if he is wise takes stock; How much can he lay by? Pipes, beer, etc.

Look round—large stock of brotherly love. 'I pray that your *love may increase* and abound one towards

another.' Not bankrupt. Are we always taking stock of our wonderful human machinery and keeping it in order and repair by temperance and purity of life?

Taking stock *at home.* Is home as comfortable as it might be? Drink *dreadfully dear!* Kindness—no roughness to wife or children—thank you—please—soft answer to children leads to respect for parents. Is it a home of prayer? Is obedience, truthfulness, and purity in word and deed always set before the children?

Divine Stock Taker. 'Eyes of the Lord in every place.'

'Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising.'

Shall we ask God to take stock?

'Search me, O God, and know my heart.'"

Although no orator in the ordinary sense of the term; William White was, nevertheless, one of the most popular of speakers on Adult School and Temperance platforms all over the country. He had the power, which is greater than mere oratory, of getting at the hearts of his audiences and keeping them intensely interested from beginning to end. It may safely be said that an Adult School audience rarely, if ever, tired of listening to him, though the length of his address may sometimes have made it rather trying for the speaker who had to follow after. One reason for his success as a speaker was, undoubtedly, that he drew his illustrations from his own personal experiences. The figures on his stage were not dummies but real, suffering,

sinning men and women. His audiences knew that every sentiment was genuine, that no mere theorist stood before them, but one who had during his whole life worked, striven, and prayed for the cause he loved so well.

In 1886, at a time when his own work at Severn Street was at the height of its success, he was present at the annual meeting of the Sunday School Union in London, and delivered an address, descriptive of the work in which he was engaged, which, having fortunately been reported verbatim, gives us a vivid picture both of the man and his methods such as we could hardly have obtained second-hand.

Once a month I visit the Birmingham Borough Prison as a Visiting Justice. I am always very careful in going from cell to cell to ask something of the former condition of those who find themselves in such places, and nearly the whole of them have been in Sunday Schools, and yet, sad to say, find themselves within the walls of a prison for greater or lesser offences. It is to get hold of these classes, even gaol-birds, that we wish; we *have* got hold of some of them, I think, by God's blessing, tightly; and we have been permitted to see the change which has taken place in their whole surroundings. Men who have been two or three times in prison for various offences are now true Christian men; members of Christian Churches, and in many ways fulfilling the duties of life with credit to themselves and to those connected with them. Therefore, when one thinks of the vast population of our great towns, and especially of this great Metropolis, how one yearns to introduce into the midst of a population such as this,

some instrumentality that shall put the Bible into the hands of men and women, and that shall bring them to hear from kindly lips of the love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; that shall help them to raise their social conditions and give them higher tastes and desires than they have at the present time. It seems to me that where the ordinary places of worship or ordinary mission hall, sometimes fail to accomplish this, the Adult Sunday School has been instrumental, under the Divine blessing, in gathering in a few from darkness to light, and in bringing them under true Christian influences, and in time setting these very people to work for others on behalf of their Lord and Master.

I often wish that I could present one or two living witnesses from those who have come out of the horrible pit and miry clay; men who are occupying good, respectable positions in society, who had first, perhaps, obtained the saving knowledge from the truth in sitting with some modest, retiring teacher, who had the spiritual interest of the scholars at heart. Stimulated by the force of his teacher's Christian kindliness and example, such a man has got others round him, and with the power of the Divine grace to improve and enlarge the heart, he has been the means of bringing about the same desirable result in them. I have a little class of my own of 300 in a school of 3,000, and I suppose I could, speaking at random, take my friends to at least 200 homes with which I am familiar out of these 300, and show the result of the Christian life in working men's homes. I can show the fruits of temperance, and I can show the nice pieces of furniture; and all these things in a working man's house are no evidence of extravagance, but evidence rather of thrift and sobriety. Such men not only learn how, by their skill and industry six days in the week, to get their wages together, but

learn, by God's blessing, how to spend it. We can see that when men have learned the fear of the Lord they have also learned the beginning of wisdom. They get good understanding in endeavouring to do God's commandments, and therefore the testimony of the wives of such men as these is that the money goes further than it used to do. Of course when men have learned the wisdom of spending as well as of earning, and take their money to the shops to get value for it instead of exclusively to one shop, then we are certain what the result will be in the homes and in their surroundings.

I know nothing so leavening as these Adult Sunday Schools. They are sure to bring the lowly up and the lofty down. If a man has any nonsense in him, or any notion of his own dignity, or of the deference that ought to be shown to his superior station and education, he has only to sit down in a class of adult scholars for a year, and he will learn a great many things about himself and his surroundings that he never knew before. Yet I am bound to say, after thirty-eight years' experience with Adult Classes of working men, that I have never had an unkindly or disrespectful word uttered to me. I have had very much more given to me than I am able to give; so that I am bound to testify that if a man will only go into the work with simplicity and courage he will have abundant cause for thankfulness and rejoicing. Then there is another aspect of the question which I wish to lay some stress upon. Some objection has been taken—very much less now-a-days than formerly—to the teaching of writing in these Adult Schools as inconsistent with Sunday duties. If one sees the result on men who were only attracted to learn writing, and are now able to bear testimony as to how much more they have learned, I think that is a sufficient answer to those who make the objection.

Then, it is said, writing has become so much more universal, that it is hardly necessary to teach it at all in these Schools. But there are multitudes of people yet (among the working classes) who are against anything that seems too religious; and they will come if you advertise the School for reading and writing; and, being gifted with some guile, we give them Scripture texts to write, and the scholar writes them in his book. Very soon after I became a teacher in our School, having cause to visit a man who was becoming a little careless in his attendance, although he came to school to learn to write in order that he might get a little promotion from his employer; I found I was not getting the real reason why he had grown careless. He made one excuse after another, saying that the baby kept him awake at night, and such things; but at last he said, "If you must have it, you pitch it so religious in your Sunday School." I have often related this circumstance to those of my friends who were so chary as to secularism, whatever that may be, and I think some people have very vague ideas about it. The man said, "I did not come to learn religion, but writing." I have found it best not to be too serious over such remarks as these. I said, "Do not we teach writing?" "Yes," said the man. "Well, then, we throw the other into the bargain without any extra charge." I said, "We are not learned men at our School; some of us have been to School a little bit longer than some friends who come to our classes; we have learned a little about the Bible and other things, and we are willing to tell you anything we know. We do not set up ourselves for learned professors, or anything of that sort. Let me ask if anything we have tried to teach you out of the Bible has been likely to damage a working man, or make him a worse husband or workman, or has set

the masters against him and lowered his wages, and that sort of thing?" "Oh! no; but for the matter of that, if we minded what you told us, it would be better for us". I said, "We have only to know each other a a little longer, and we shall enjoy one another's company; I want us to be better acquainted, and then we shall learn to like one another and love one another." And we have learned to love one another, and that man who saved his first shilling in our Class is now a scholar and living in a comfortable villa, and keeps his pony and carriage in which he drives his wife to our social parties. A man who had never attended a place of worship from the time he went to the Sunday School, and heard of the Adult Sunday School in a public-house, only came in the first place to learn to write for his own pecuniary gain, but a more kindly or worthy Christian I hardly know than that man. I mention this as simply a case of a similar character, where men have said: "I only came to learn to write." One said, "I thought myself a tolerably clever fellow, but I soon found out I was only a blessed fool, when I found I was amongst those so much better taught than myself." Another said:—"Only think of me being able to write a letter, and only think of me writing the name of Jesus Christ and enjoying reading the Bible, and enjoying going to a place of worship, and that sort of thing; it is too good to be true." I have heard that, with slight variations, hundreds and hundreds of times during the last 25 years, and I have it in a pile of scholars' letters which might reach a yard and a half high. Why do I mention these things? Simply to prove, if any proof were necessary among my friends here, the joy and happiness, and blessing, which come to a teacher who possibly began his work with fear and trembling, and felt awkward at the first. A little faith springs up in his heart, and young

men who are "not cut out for the work," as they say, are drawn in and find their highest pleasure and enjoyment in such work as this. These Adult Schools, let me say, without the slightest disparagement to the Bible Classes proper, cover more of the life of a man—his social, moral, and intellectual life—than the attendance simply at a Bible Class for an hour on Sunday afternoon or Sunday morning. The great point with these Adult Schools is to give the scholars something to do, and that the teacher should never be a big man among them, but only be an elder brother, and a quiet adviser and counsellor rather than a high-priest or anything of that sort in the midst of these people. He may have as much influence as God gives him grace to have, and yet he may exercise that influence so quietly and modestly, and so use his influence with the men, that a great deal of the work of the Class may be taken off his hands.

If I may tell you my own personal experience, in relation to this, I would say that in my Class of 300 I have one colleague to help me, regularly appointed by the Teachers' Meeting, a person in my own station of life; the rest of the work of the Class has been done for twenty-five years past by the scholars themselves. We have elementary teachers, but they still remain scholars. The rule is, every man sits with his teacher at some time during the holding of the School, and receives his Bible lesson, and by that means the teacher keeps in touch with every helper, and they, on their part, are able to exercise influence among their fellows, which the teachers would be unable to do. Very many men who have been introduced into our School, have begun by sitting with these elementary teachers, who would never have ventured in the first place to sit with someone whom

they would suppose to be a little above them in social position. For some of these people a preparatory process is necessary. They have to be brought into contact by degrees with the aristocracy of the working men, from whom they feel as far distant as we should from the great ones of the West End. When such a man, who has attended a Temperance Meeting on Saturday evening, finds himself turned into our school on Sunday morning, he looks round in wonder. They are a different sort to the bad lot he has been accustomed to associate with. One man, for instance, was put into the section of those who are learning to read and spell; in giving his experience he said: "I thought I should never get on as far as them there; I should never be so learned as them; all I knew was 'O' and 'S,' and I knew 'O' because it was round, and 'S' because it was crooked; and I wanted my bit of 'bacca badly, and I felt inclined to run away." That man's story is a very interesting and touching one. He is now as comfortable, and happy, and as bright and cheerful a working man as any I know.

About four years ago, being Mayor of Birmingham, I was entertaining some municipal friends at my house. The servant came in and said a man was anxious to see me, and I went to see who it was, and found our friend, who said: "Oh, teacher, I am the happiest man in Birmingham to-night." I said, "Oh! has somebody left you a fortune?" And he said, "No, teacher, I can read God's Word for myself, and I want you to go down on your knees and thank God that He has put a little light into my dark heart." I felt embarrassed, but I am always at home to Severn Street scholars, and they know it, and sometimes come at unseasonable hours. But it was God's opportunity to

this poor man. He who only knew "O" from "S" now felt learned enough to read a chapter in the Bible. I went with him into the library, and took down a big Bible, but the man said, "No; I have my own Bible with me, and I can read from that best," and read slowly the first chapter of John's Gospel. It took him a long while, but he went through without a mistake, and tears ran from his eyes as he said, "Now, teacher, I want us to go on our knees and thank God," and we did. We thanked God that he had given us both joy that evening, and that He had brought light into the dark heart of my friend, and light into my heart as a consequence, and he went on his way rejoicing, while I rejoined my friends. We have many instances of this sort, where men discover in the Bible such a precious treasure in truth and wisdom, that they almost rub their eyes and say, "What have I been doing for thirty years, and I did not know about this?" One man said, "I did not know that that was in the Bible." That was the tale of the Good Samaritan. "I belong," he said, "to a Good Samaritan Club, and we hang a flag out of a public-house; I knew it was all about doing good, but I shall think a deal more of it now that I know it is in the Bible." This illustrates the class of persons that we have to deal with, and no doubt there are a great many in the Metropolis, as there are in our large towns and little towns, who know just as little of the Bible as those two men I have referred to.

I sometimes say, when then is a possibility of my friends thinking I am exaggerating, "If you think I have been painting in too bright colours, and drawing the long bow, and letting my enthusiasm run, go and see; you shall have the best evidence you can have in 'living witnesses,'" and people have gone and seen, not

only in our own schools but in other schools; and they have gone and done likewise, and received like blessings, and have felt how very much in this way the "missing link" has been discovered.

Let me give one illustration of this. One dark December Sunday evening, two or three years ago, I went over to Brierley Hill, where we were to have a great meeting in the Town Hall, and I was to tell something about Adult Sunday Schools. The Salvation Army had established themselves as town-criers, and were bringing in more than the room would hold. I told my story and said, "As to what I have been saying, if you do not believe me, go and see." I had no sooner sat down than a man in the middle of the hall said, "Mr. White has not told one-half of what he might have told," and he mentioned that he had been a scholar in our school years before, and had received temporal and spiritual blessings as a consequence; and he confirmed that which I had said in several ways. On a very rainy Sunday morning a fortnight afterwards, I went into my class-room and saw a number of strangers—I supposed new scholars. "How is this?" I said, "We do not often get new applicants in December." When the New Year comes men come in with good resolutions. I went up to them and saw eleven drowned rats. They had walked eleven miles from Brierley Hill through the rain in order to prove whether the man from Birmingham told the truth. We had to dry and feed them, and turned them adrift among the various classes. There they saw the men of whom I had been speaking, and also many others, and heard from their lips the story of change of heart and life, and they went back to Brierley Hill fully determined to give one or two Christian people no rest until a school similar to the one in Birmingham had been started.

It may be said how are such schools to be established? What is the *modus operandi?* I had the pleasure a little while ago of addressing a number of clergy under the shadow of the Lichfield Cathedral, and endeavoured to introduce among them the "missing link." One of the clergy asked me what were the qualifications necessary for a teacher and the establishment of an Adult School. I said I would answer in a very few words: "Sanctified common sense; *that* is the only ingredient necessary to begin and carry on a successful school." The clergyman turned to his fellow clergymen on the platform, and said, "Yes, and a capital thing too, but sometimes forgotten in the pulpit." Let me say that where sanctified common-sense prevails, where a man or a woman has a desire in his or her heart to do something for the spiritual good of their fellow-creatures, they will find a great variety of expedients necessary—in fact everything within the limits of truth and soberness, Christian love and Christian duty. There is no occasion to have fun or nonsense or tomfoolery on Sundays or week-days in order to interest the working man in the truths of the Gospel. It is delightful to find how the efforts of teachers have been abundantly blessed by the great Husbandman, and how large a harvest of souls has been gathered.

I do not think there is a church in Birmingham that is not the richer in numbers for the work of the Adult Sunday Schools which we have scattered abroad all over the town. In those "godless Board Schools" (laughter)—so much spoken of in Birmingham, is proclaimed the Name of the blessed Lord and Saviour both on Sunday and week-day evenings. I suppose that 30 out of the 36 Board Schools are used for religious services in connection with Adult Schools, and the result has been that scholars, having these schools nearer at

hand, find it easier on dark winter mornings to get to them than to walk two or three miles to the Parent School. Yet, I am glad to say, the old school-house is well filled, notwithstanding the competition all around us. An Adult School must succeed if there is sanctified common-sense, together with a well warmed room in winter,—a great thing,—plenty of sunshine in the teacher's face, kindly words from his lips, no preaching, but rather friendly talk, making the Bible a practical book to those who listen. We do not want to make the scholars theologians, in order to make them Christians. Theological scholars are not always the most advanced in Divine truth; and the man who wants to argue knotty points does not help his scholars or himself, and is often voted a bore. Teachers should give the scholars one particular lesson that they can carry home in their hearts, one that they will talk about amongst themselves, for they will often read over some of the portions of Scripture again, which have particularly struck their minds. These are very often some of the results of the gathering together of men who, perhaps, have never before had a Bible in their hands.

Punctuality is absolutely essential in those who conduct Adult Schools. Perhaps I may be permitted to say without egotism that, having to walk more than two miles, I have to leave my home at half-past six on Sunday mornings to meet forty other teachers, who gather together at the same hour as I do. We are, therefore, able to urge punctual attendance on our scholars; and that, in itself, is good discipline for working men. Many a man has learned to get out of bed on Sunday morning early, and has gone to school, and, on leaving at 9.30, has looked about him, not knowing what to do. He has seen Christian people going to places of worship and has followed them.

Many, whose last hours I have witnessed, have been able to bear testimony to the power of that great salvation of which they first heard from a teacher's lips in an Adult School.

In 1882, William White's services to the community were recognised by his election as Mayor of Birmingham. As enthusiastic workers from Severn Street had, in 1873, helped to send him to the Town Council, this appointment naturally gave great satisfaction. The report for the following year states that "we who have, to a much greater extent than others, received his teaching, his love, and kind hospitality, have joined most heartily in approval of that appointment. We feel that in honouring him we have been honoured."

The year 1895 was a notable one in the history of the Severn Street Schools, as being the Fiftieth Anniversary of their commencement. During that half-century over 65,000 persons had passed through the Schools. On Saturday, the 12th October, eleven thousand people, all more or less closely connected with the movement, gathered at a Conversazione in Bingley Hall. Addressing the crowded gathering in the Gymnasium, the late John T. Dorland, referred to the Chairman of the meeting in the following terms:—

"The greatest satisfaction is that we have our honoured and venerable friend, William White, with us. It is fitting that he should be the

chronicler of the past fifty years of the movement. I have only one fault to find with that work (William White's "History of Severn Street Schools"); and that is, Alderman White, with the modesty that becomes him, has left himself out of the work altogether. But I fancy that mistake will be remedied when the Centenary volume comes out at the completion of one hundred years of their history. Our friend will not then be able to prevent the record of his services being in that volume."

On the following (Sunday) afternoon a great Thanksgiving Meeting, since then an annual event, was held in the Town Hall. The whole tone of the meeting was aptly illustrated by one of the stanzas of the Jubilee Hymn:—

"And now we meet, not with vain boasting, surely,
To tell of work accomplished, victories won;
Nay, rather let us whisper to our Father,
Sorrow for all that we have left undone."

Five years later another Anniversary Meeting was held, but under the shadow of a great sorrow, for the good grey head to whom we had looked as our trusted and loved leader for so many years, would not be seen again in our midst. As we looked around on the thousands of sad faces that Sunday afternoon one almost wondered if it were possible that the work should go on as before without that master-heart to guide and inspire. But, great as his

life-work had been, the influence of William White was not to be limited to his bodily presence, and a monument to his memory is being raised by those who, mindful of his life's love, are carrying on and ever enlarging the work of his zeal and affection, a monument—inscribed not in letters of brass nor in carven stone, but in the record of changed and happy lives, and in the hearts of thousands who have eternal cause to bless his memory and his name.

The beautiful lines written by Matthew Arnold in memory of his father seem particularly appropriate to the life of William White, a Christian whose model was always Christ the Good Shepherd:—

"But thou would'st not *alone*
Be saved, my father! *alone*
Conquer and come to thy goal,
Leaving the rest in the wild.
We were weary, and we
Fearful, and we in our march
Fain to drop down and to die.
Still thou turnedst, and still
Beckonest the trembler, and still
Gavest the weary thy hand."

"If, in the paths of the world,
Stones might have wounded thy feet,
Toil or dejection have tried
Thy spirit, of that we saw
Nothing—to us thou wast still
Cheerful, and helpful, and firm!
Therefore to thee it was given
Many to save with thyself;
And, at the close of the day,
O faithful shepherd! to come,
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand."

CHAPTER V.

WORK FOR TEMPERANCE.

> "Who gives himself with his alms feeds three:
> Himself, his hungering neighbor, and Me."
>
> *J. R. Lowell.*

HAD William White never been known as an Adult School worker he would still be remembered, in Birmingham at least, for his strenuous labours in the cause of Temperance, for his interest in the question of better houses for the working classes, and especially for the kindly interest that he took in all matters affecting the welfare of the large number of Municipal and Government employés in Birmingham. For many years he never missed inviting the Telegraph messenger boys to tea in the beautiful grounds behind his house in Sir Harry's Road, when cricket, tug-of-war and fishing in the mysterious depths of the pool were among the amusements provided. As regularly, too, were the members of the Police Force his guests, and

by no body of men (except his Class at Severn Street) was he better known and more greatly beloved. He was the first President of the Police Mission, founded in 1878, and held the office till 1891, when, at his suggestion, the late Earl of Lichfield succeeded him. William White loved to be amongst the constables and their wives and children at their religious gatherings, which for nearly 20 years were held in Class I. Room at Severn Street, and many men in "the Force" date the beginning of their spiritual life from these meetings. He and the late Alderman Richard C. Barrow had been the main founders of the old Police Institute in Easy Row, and when the scheme for the fine new premises in James Watt Street was set on foot he was unanimously elected Chairman of the Trustees. He was personally known to almost every constable in the City, though the following anecdote told by him at a meeting for the promotion of Total Abstinence in the Force, shows that there were occasional exceptions:—

> "I often think and pray for the Police Officers, who are on their beats in the cold inclement weather, especially at nights, for I greatly sympathise with them. I well remember, one New Year's Eve, when I was plodding my way home just after midnight, and the bells of the Parish Church were ringing a merry peal to usher in the New Year, I met an Officer in

one of the quiet Edgbaston roads. I stopped to speak to him, wishing him a 'Happy New Year,' and remarked upon the lovely sound of the church bells ringing out in the clear, still air. The Officer, who evidently did not know me, said, 'Ah! sir, there's a gallon of ale and a couple of bottles of whiskey at the end of them ropes.'"

At the end of the same meeting he (a teetotaler of 40 years' standing) said, taking the pledge-book in his hand, "I am going to sign the pledge with you this afternoon, my friends;" sign it he did, and was followed by a large number of the Police there present. A year later he was one of the recipients of the Police Total Abstinence Society's Silver Medal, given to all its members who had kept the pledge for a twelve-month. On Tuesday, September 4, 1900, only seven days before his death, he paid what proved to be his last visit to the Police Institute, on one of those errands of love in which he delighted, to see the Secretary, who was ill. William White appeared in his usual health, and when the Secretary remarked on his kindness in climbing so many stairs to reach his bedroom, he smilingly replied, "Oh, it does not hurt me, it is nice exercise for a young man."

It would be difficult to treat his Temperance Work as a separate phase of his life. In his early days at Reading, Burton, and Brighton, he

was among the most ardent of the apostles of the new crusade. At the age of 20 he was elected Chief Ruler of the Order of Rechabites. In later years, though his zeal had no whit abated, he perhaps appeared less frequently at Temperance Meetings pure and simple, but his lessons to his Scholars and addresses to working men gave him abundant opportunity, of which he took full advantage, for preaching the lessons of Total Abstinence. Those who have heard him refer to "nourishing stout" are not likely to forget the simple force and sarcastic humour of his words: "they speak of nourishing stout! don't you believe it, my friends. *Nourishing stout!* it's a DOWNRIGHT LIE."

He was not, however, one who was content merely to preach Total Abstinence to working men without endeavouring to provide something to take the place of the snug bar-parlour of the public-house, with its undoubtedly great attractions to the man with a poor and comfortless home. His teaching was most emphatically positive rather than negative, and, while never tired of using all the influence he possessed to induce the working men and their wives with whom he came in contact to strive to make their homes the centre of the true pleasures of family life rather than mere sleeping places, at the same time he was ever to the fore in welcoming any movement for providing wholesome evening recreation, especially in connection with the

evening clubs for youths and men, which, before his death, had come to be associated with almost every Adult School.

In the early Seventies, when Coffee Houses were a novelty, he was one of the promoters of the Birmingham Coffee House Company, a concern founded at first almost solely as a philanthropic institution, although its usefulness has only been more widely extended by the fact that for many years it has been one of the most flourishing commercial concerns in the Midlands. For over twenty-five years he was Chairman of the Board of Directors, an office which he retained till his death. Profoundly convinced as he was that Total Abstinence is likely to add to the span of the years of man's life, he became a shareholder and director of the "Blue Ribbon" (now "The Abstainers") Life Assurance Company, and always took an active interest in the conduct of its affairs. Although not possessing the keen business intellect and grasp of figures which some at least of the members of such a board must have, his help was most valuable to his fellow-directors, especially when any question arose as to a country agency, for William White had a most intimate and accurate knowledge of the local pecularities, of almost every district and town in England.

Photo by J. F. Pike.

POOL IN WILLIAM WHITE'S GROUNDS.

CHAPTER VI.

RECREATIONS AND HOLIDAYS.

"My God I thank Thee, Who hast made
The earth so bright;
So full of splendour and of joy,
Beauty and light;
So many glorious things are here,
Noble and right."

A. A. Proctor.

"GOD Almighty first planted a garden," and Gardening—that most ancient of all ancient crafts—has been both joy and recreation to many of His servants in all ages. William White was not one who preached the virtues and delights of early rising from the usual standpoint of him who heroically abstains from tasting such delights himself. His garden was to him a source of untold pleasure, a scene of early morning labours joyfully given for the reward of gay blossoms and sweet scents. At the back of his house in Sir Harry's Road, Edgbaston, lay a stretch of green lawn and trim flower beds, hardly a rood in extent, exquisitely neat and

wonderfully bright in colour. At the end of this garden, by a tiny pool, where of old a fat trout lurked, a little wicket gate led on to a large field, or rather a blend of pools and meadow, a labyrinth of hawthorn and willow shaded paths, a haunt of water rat and moor-hen with glaucous sheen of bluebells in the Spring. Round these paths he used to walk every Sunday morning, when light, before going to School, and in the quiet and the stillness gain strength for the duties of the day. Here, too, he would come in the evening, calling the ducks and swans to share the corn and bread-crumbs with which he delighted to feed them; while they, the ducks, were divided in their minds 'twixt love of the tempting feast and fear of Sam the terrier, who always accompanied his master on his rounds.

William White made a practice of rising at six o'clock in the morning to work in his beloved garden, and hence it was that he succeeded with many plants which less sympathetic owners of larger gardens regarded as impossible to be grown near the city. Many a tale could he relate of the history of his plants, the Osmunda Fern brought from Moseley Common in days long before Birmingham had spread its octopus arms in that direction; other plants reminiscent of this or that dear friend, since dead; on the rock border, trophies of long past or recent holidays among the Swiss

mountains; but each and every one loved for itself, its history, or its associations. Every Sunday morning he would gather a bunch of leaves and flowers to place on the desk in his Class-room at Severn Street, but he did not care to wear flowers, and was rarely, if ever, seen with one in his button-hole. His authority on the subject was recognised by his election as President of the Birmingham Amateur Gardeners' Association, an office which he held for many years.

The love of gardening was a life-long bond of friendship between him and his predecessor in business, Henry Newman; the latter was, and is, famous for his fruit, and William White was *very* fond of gooseberries. And so, when June came round, Henry Newman would post his friend a little box containing two somewhat unripe gooseberries to signify that a visit was almost due, and then a little later another match box would arrive from Leominster with ripe fruit to show that the time had come, and William White would start off for the visit like a school-boy out on a holiday.

It is also on record that he once tried to learn to ride on one of those visits to Leominster, but that he was so amused with the antics of his host's little dog that he almost rolled out of his saddle with laughter, and we fear he never became an expert equestrian.

Hard worker as he was for the whole of

his life, he retained the faculty, so often only associated with youth, of keen enjoyment of his holidays. These were generally spent in Switzerland or Italy, with a friend, sometimes with one or more of his nephews or nieces, thrice at least with a party of Scholars from his Class; and those who had the privilege of accompanying him on these tours all agree in describing him as the most delightful of travelling companions, and the most able of guides. He was almost as much at home at Neuchâtel and Cologne, Shaffhausen or Zurich, as in his own Birmingham, and was known and loved by many an hotel-keeper in the Rhine Valley and Switzerland. Sir Richard Tangye, who was his companion on many of his holiday tours, writes of these expeditions:—

"His great knowledge of the Continent and the methods of travel, and his unvarying helpfulness greatly conduced to the interest and comfort of these journeys; and his quaint Quakerly and genial wit often enlivened us when tired after long walking. On one occasion, when crossing the Grande Place at Genoa, we met the late Canon B——, with whom some of our party were acquainted. The Canon was returning from a visit to Rome, and we asked him how he had been, while there. 'Not very well,' he replied, 'I have had a touch of Roman fever,' upon which William White remarked, with his dry humour, 'Not an uncommon thing when clergymen go to Rome, I think.'

"During these tours when we frequently walked

great distances, my friend contributed from his well-stored mind many interesting details of his early youth and of his maturer life. Sometimes on these long foreign excursions one of those inevitable little differences of opinion would arise, very often occasioned by his somewhat defective hearing. On such occasions he would go on ahead for a mile, walking at a rapid pace, and then he would rejoin his companions with a placid face, remarking, 'I am better now.' During these excursions it was my friend's custom every Sunday morning to commune in spirit with his Class at Severn Street, and to go through the lesson of the day as though present with them; and he was never happy until he had written a letter to be read to his Class there. The Rhineland tours with their blend of Nineteenth Century and Mediæval life, the acquaintances formed with his fellow-travellers, the grandeur of mountain scenery and the hundred things of beauty and interest that make up the joy and fascination of travel, were all the more sources of delight to him in that he shared them with the hundreds of working men far off in smoky Birmingham."

BASEL, SWITZERLAND,
August 2nd, 1888.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I am glad to find another opportunity of holding converse with you, and while absent to recall the kindly faces and familiar voices of so many who have become dear to me.

. . . . . .

I notice with much interest the beautiful parks and gardens which seem to be increasingly provided for the use of the people both in smaller as well as in the larger towns, and which are always open without gates or locks day and night. The most perfect order is kept, and no injury is visible to the rare and costly plants which, with the summer climate and warmer nights than ours, are often to be found growing in the open air. The people, too, who use them do not throw their litter and rubbish about as our people are so apt to do in our parks and gardens.

. . . . . .

How I wish it were possible for some of you who have not travelled far from home to take a trip to Switzerland to see the mighty mountains and glaciers. Well, we may be thankful for the beauties that abound in our own land, of which too many are still in ignorance, and for the peace and liberty we enjoy. In raising our hearts in thankfulness to our Heavenly Father we may well join the Psalmist in singing "He hath not dealt so with any nation, and as for His judgments they have not known them."

Yours very truly,

WILLIAM WHITE.

LUCERNE,

August 9th, 1888.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

As I am leaving this most delightful place after breakfast I must devote an early hour to writing you a few more lines. Let me now describe my present

surroundings. The sun, which for half-an-hour has been gilding a distant snow peak, has just risen above the Rigi, a mountain nearly 6,000 feet high, which is just in front of my window. The beautiful Lake of Lucerne is parting with its early mists and is shimmering in the sunshine. A large steamer has just started for its voyage of twenty-five miles to the head of the Lake. Loads of firewood are being brought ashore by sturdy men in blue jackets. Great flat boats bringing market produce are appearing, rowed from nearer or more distant villages, loaded with cherries, plums, pears, big cauliflowers, lettuce, and other fruit and vegetables. A long line of chestnut trees extending for nearly a mile borders the Lake on my left, behind which extend a long row of handsome hotels which altogether can, and will, lodge about 7,000 strangers every night during the month of August. On the left a lofty crag, called the Burgenstock, rises out of the Lake, crowned with great fir woods; and beyond are two graceful peaks about 7,000 feet high, backed by snow mountains rising to 11,000 and 12,000 feet.

The Rigi, as some of you know, has a railway to its summit where there is hotel accommodation for 1,000 people. A day or two ago I accompanied two ladies in making the ascent. The carriages and engines have a cog wheel between the rails, and the ascent is made in about an hour. At the foot you pass orchards and gardens, then you rise among great walnut and chestnut trees, among rocks and crags, through fir woods and pretty waterfalls, until at last the summit is reached where a wonderful prospect a hundred

miles in diameter greets the eye. Wood and forest, a dozen lakes, cornfields and pastures, towers and towns, great snow mountains, glaciers and rocks fill up the scene, the details of which would take long to describe. We preferred descending on foot, feasting on our way down on fine luscious cherries and alpine strawberries. In a visitors' book in a little inn half-way down I read my own name and that of George Powell, Edward Davis, Frederick Patching, and others, who went up and down the Rigi on foot in 1871, before the railway was made.

The weather in Switzerland and on the Continent generally has been cold and rainy; evidences of this are to be seen everywhere in spoiled hay, backward crops, and extensive floods. Here at Lucerne the Lake has not been so high for 30 years; in the lower part of the town the cellars are filled with water, and I have never before seen so much snow on the mountains in August. Happily, at present, all this is changed, and warmth and sunshine prevail.

After a pleasant sojourn here of some days I and my friends are leaving, after breakfast, by the beautiful Brünig road for Meiringen, a charming little place closely surrounded by mountains and waterfalls.

By another First-day I hope to be in my place again; happily, when one has been enjoying a holiday there is much pleasure in returning to one's usual occupation and duties, and to the loving greetings of one's old friends at Severn Street.

May we all on First-day morning who are abroad, and you who are at home, be enabled once more to join

heart to heart in blessing and praising our gracious Heavenly Father for the goodness and mercy which continue to follow us all, and try to

"Sound the depths unknown
Of His redeeming grace,
Grace that gave His only Son
To save our ruined race."

With much love to all,

Very truly yours,

WILLIAM WHITE.

In the spring of 1891 he visited the Riviera and Northern Italy whence he writes from Genoa:—

March 25th, 1891.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I spent First-day at the beautiful town of Mentone on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, at the foot of a fine range of hills on which grow great olive trees which are a good source of wealth to the people of that part of France. There are also vines everywhere, mulberries and fruit trees in profusion. At about the time you would be assembling for school, 7-30 a.m., I sought out a quiet spot to read our lesson, and think of you and pray for a mutual blessing. It was at the head of a valley about a mile long, something like Dovedale, with a pretty stream running rapidly; high up were olives with their grey foliage, fig trees and mulberries and vines and in the more level parts oranges and lemons, the trees being loaded with rich and fragrant fruit. The blossoms of peach, pear, plum and almond were everywhere to be seen throughout the whole length of the valley; the sun passing out

of the shadow of a great rock became so bright and dazzling that I was obliged to seek the shade; in the distance were the blue waters of the Mediterranean. No sight in this world could be more lovely, and that familiar verse of ours seemed to be peculiarly fitted for the occasion—

> "Eternal Wisdom! Thee we praise,
> Thee the creation sings;
> At Thy loved Name rocks, hills and seas,
> And Heaven's high palace rings."

Truly the skies were "tinged with a blue of heavenly dye," and the earth was "clothed with living green," and "a thousand flowers" displayed the art of the Great Creator.

Along the sea shore are great palms, and the bedding plants in the gardens are cinerarias, cyclamen, primulas and marigolds. White roses are blossoming everywhere, and heliotrope and geraniums, six feet high, are also in full bloom. One sees what large quantities of flowers are daily sent from here, some of which no doubt reach our Market Hall.

On the following day I had a very different and much less pleasing experience. Many of you must have read of that headquarters of gambling, Monte Carlo, where great fortunes have sometimes been staked on a single turn of the wheel, and where tens of thousands of pounds are daily lost, or won, by foolish people who get led into the evil fascination of the gaming table. I have hardly ever in my life before seen gambling even on a small scale. Monte Carlo is one of the loveliest spots on this beautiful coast. All Nature smiles, and the great

palace-like Gambling House, standing high up above the sea, surrounded by the most exquisite grounds, is a magnificent structure. Here I saw hundreds of anxious-looking people, titled ladies, noblemen, and middle-class folk, sitting round piles of gold and silver and bank notes. I saw a young man lose £500 at a single stroke. It was a sad sight, nobody looked happy and many went away truly miserable, and it is no uncommon thing for those who have lost all, to commit suicide, sometimes ten or a dozen in a single season. These sad cases are hushed up, and near by is a wretched, neglected little burying ground, where the miserable victims of sin and folly are interred, and only a rough stake marks the place of their burial. But we must now turn away from this spot of evil memories, and travel through about a hundred miles of oranges and lemons, figs, mulberries, vines and palms to this interesting and beautiful city of Genoa, now the principal port of Italy, and full of fine churches and palaces. Oranges and lemons are being sold in the streets at 2d. and 3d. a dozen, and fine branches cut from the trees with twenty or thirty fruit are sold for about 6d. The working classes here live in tall houses eight and ten storeys high, and hang their clothes out of the window to dry.

The weather in Italy has been cold for the season, but the sun shines every day bright and warm though the snow lies on the higher mountains.

With love to all of you,
Your affectionate friend,
WILLIAM WHITE.

At Florence he was specially interested in a visit to an Italian Adult School, and his "gossiping" letter is crowded with fifty graphic touches which made its reading an occasion of great interest to the Class at home.

FLORENCE,
April 1st, 1891.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

Since my last letter I have spent several days in the beautiful city of Florence, first visiting Pisa, celebrated for its beautiful Leaning Tower and a magnificent Cathedral. Florence, on the River Arno, which is crossed by some fine bridges, has about half the population of Birmingham. It is a city of grand churches, palaces, picture galleries and museums of statuary, and various art treasures. I suppose there are pictures enough to fill ten of our Art Galleries, at least; and many of them are the works of some of the old painters of three and four hundred years ago, and are worth countless thousands of pounds. Many of the streets and lanes are very narrow, with very lofty and solidly built houses in which many families live. In some as many as a dozen bell handles are to be seen at one front door. How noisy the Italians are in street and shop and market, always talking, shouting, singing, laughing! and the Drivers of carts, carriages, and omnibuses rattle rapidly along the stone-paved streets cracking their whips, and very little regarding the safety of foot passengers. What a wealth of flowers is to be seen in the streets, the dealers, mostly women,

thrusting them into one's face at every turn! Let us step into the market. What a din there is! Fifty butchers with loud voices offering Easter lambs for sale, and great sausages half-a-yard long and six inches thick smelling loudly of garlic; a hundred women are shrilly crying vegetables, artichokes, asparagus, brocoli, new potatoes, apples, pears, dried plums, and tomatoes. Here is a group of men and boys getting their breakfast, sitting round a three-legged pot with a little charcoal burning under it. Each person has his lump of bread, purchased close by, and then, paying about halfpenny, he receives a ladle full of chestnuts, beans, and a tiny scrap of liver; the bread mops up the broth, and in a few minutes the meal is despatched. Hundreds every morning make their breakfast in this way in the public streets. On First-day morning early I walked up a beautiful avenue winding round the side of a hill to an ancient church called San Miniato, from which is a glorious prospect of the city and the rich surrounding country, backed up by the lofty Appenines still crowned with snow. Here I read our lesson and thought of my friends at home with thankfulness and joy, praying in my heart that the blessing of God might rest upon us all, the

> "* * Dear uniting love,
> That will not let us part;
> Our bodies may far off remove,
> We still are one in heart."

After this I visited an interesting Orphanage carried on by an Italian gentleman, Dr. Commandi, nearly at his own cost. He is a Protestant, and his work is opposed

by the priests, but he has Italian law for his protection. Dr. Commandi has also a Day School, and the priests sometimes beat the children for going and sometimes drive them away. On First-day morning there was a class of about fifty working men reading the Italian New Testament, and some learning to write. I told them something about you, the Doctor interpreting. It was very interesting to me so unexpectedly to come across an Adult First-day School in Catholic Italy, and to find working men delivered from Popish priests, and learning from the Scriptures to know and to believe in the One Great High Priest, Jesus, the Son of God. Italy is full of soldiers, priests, and beggars. You hear martial music all day, and soldiers are to be seen in every street, and regiments are continually marching. The Italians are consequently more heavily taxed than we are. The priests swarm like black-beetles, and the beggars start up at every turn; even in the churches they ask for alms. This is the first of April. People here speak of April fish, and present one another with fishes made of sugar, chocolate, or ginger-bread, while some are gilt or silvered. On Easter Sunday I saw hundreds of children coming out of the churches with plates full of eggs which they had taken for the priests to bless. I must now bring my gossiping letter to a conclusion. With my best love and good wishes for all, and hoping you will have a pleasant Monthly Meeting,

I remain,

Your sincere friend,

WILLIAM WHITE.

VENICE, April 7th, 1891.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I am very glad once again to hold communication with you from this wonderful "City of the Waters". I am sitting very near the same spot from which eighteen years ago I wrote a letter to our Class. Many changes have taken place in our circle in that time; some of those who hear this were little children then; other dear old friends have passed away, but not a few remain with us who have been constant to the Class and to one another for long past years. It is a pleasure to think of all, both older and younger, as you will be gathered together on First-day morning, and an additional one to hope I may meet with you in the following week.

Venice is like no other city in the world. All other cities are built on the land; this is built up out of the shallow sea in the water. The houses, palaces, churches, are situated on 114 small islands, formed by 150 canals, connected by 370 bridges. Most of the houses rise immediately out of the water, and the narrow streets (Union Passage would be a very broad one) turn and wind about so that it is very easy to lose one's way. From one end of the city to the other runs a fine broad channel called the Grand Canal, crossed by the noble bridge, the Rialto, with shops on it, and connecting together the markets and busiest parts of the town. Along the Grand Canal are a number of magnificent palaces of white marble; the palace of the Doges or former Dukes of Venice is very grand and full of costly paintings and other works of art. The ancient and wonderful Cathedral of St. Mark is visited from all parts of the world by lovers of art.

It is but a short step from the Doge's Palace to the Prison—just a narrow canal crossed by the "Bridge of Sighs," over which in past times many a poor victim of lordly oppression having once crossed never enjoyed his liberty again. A sort of guillotine is shown in a narrow passage where others lost their heads, and the drain still exists through which their blood flowed. Close by is a door opening to the canal by which their bodies were conveyed out to the sea and sunk in baskets loaded with stones.

There is an enormous quantity of jewellery, both of the cheaper and more costly kinds, made in Venice, and the silversmiths' and jewellers' shops stand very thickly together in the busy streets. There are also extensive manufactories of glass in which the Venetians have long been skilled, and beautiful articles of silk are woven. But there is no smoke! Surely Birmingham would be too good a place to live in if we could say the same. Some of the houses that have stood 400 years are as bright as some of our new ones in Corporation Street. Venice fortunately has a little island two miles away, called Murano, where all the manufacturing is done; but they do not waste fuel in Italy so there is not much smoke even there. Another little island is used for the cemetery, and has pleasant walks and trees; of course all the dead have to be conveyed there by water. A funeral procession of boats is a very striking sight; so are the processions to the edge of the water. I saw one to-day in which the body was followed by hundreds of candles, not one of which was less than six feet long. More money seems to be spent in funerals even than in

Photo by H. W. Southall

THE POOL IN WINTER.

England. If the people themselves were not lively and noisy, Venice would be the most silent city in the world, as there are no horses, no carriages, carts or tramways, and no wheels but wheelbarrows. It is said that many of its people have never seen a horse or carriage. All the traffic is carried on the water. The meat and vegetables, and fruit, and all produce of the country come in by water. The scavengers' carts are boats; and if you want to go to distant parts of the city, instead of a cab you call a gondola, or you can take the omnibus boat. The railway which reaches Venice crosses the sea by a bridge three miles long, but boats convey passengers to their destinations. Italy is never as green as England, nevertheless the mulberries, with vines climbing upon them; and the cornfields and gardens make the landscape rich and beautiful, and the sun shines so often and so brightly that the atmosphere is very clear; yesterday I saw across the sea eighty miles away, some of the snow mountains of The Tyrol, from near which I wrote to you last summer. Hoping you had a pleasant Monthly Meeting, and that there are but few names to be omitted this quarter; and also that if any new scholars have been admitted I can make their acquaintance by another First-day,

I am, your friend, very truly,

WILLIAM WHITE.

His letters contain many references to the public gardens and parks in Germany and Switzerland, which he used to compare with those in Birmingham, somewhat to the disadvantage of the latter. The Continental, and American, plan of leaving gardens

and parks unprotected by fencing impressed him very favourably, but he was doubtful how far the arrangement would work in Birmingham.

"I often think how much more we could do to beautify our big, smoky city, if only the roughs would reform or emigrate; or if all parents, as the Severn Street Scholars *always* do, would train up their children in orderly ways and teach them to admire instead of destroy what is intended for the public good."

Gardener and flower-lover as he was, he sorrowed over the thousands of hapless fern and flower roots torn up year by year from the Worcestershire lanes to perish from neglect or smoke in a flower-pot or back garden.

Writing of his most beloved of Swiss Valleys, the Maderaner Thal, where, in his 76th year, he was tramping long distances in August, 1895, he says:—

"We found the ferns and flowers and sweet scented thymes in rich profusion, and bilberries and wild raspberries to furnish a feast for the thirsty traveller. We counted no less than twelve varieties of ferns in the valley growing abundantly in every crevice of the mossy rocks, and no 'Brummagem' trippers to drag them out of their quiet nooks. I did so heartily congratulate them on their safety from such cruel raids.

You will judge by what I have written that by a good Providence accompanying me, I do not feel much diminution in my walking powers, though I am careful not to

overtax them, and have found that a good many hours on my feet every day do not lead to much fatigue but, followed by a bath, only to refreshing sleep.

. . . . .

How I wished when I was reading our lesson with you last First-day morning you could have sat with me and enjoyed the glorious landscape, and called up some of the thoughts we some of us like to dwell upon, of the Greatness and Wonderful Power and Wisdom of our God and Father; but more of his great Love to us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

With sublime snow peaks and glittering lakes and forests and waterfalls in view we might yet have sung:—

'But the mild glories of Thy Grace
Our softer passions move,
Pity Divine in Jesu's Face
We see, adore and love.'"

In 1896 he was accompanied to Switzerland by six Scholars of his Class, who retain a vivid remembrance, not only of his charm as a travelling companion and skill as a guide, but of his extraordinary walking and climbing powers; which exceeded those of any of his companions, although he was by far the oldest member of the party.

It was probably this love of action, and desire to be constantly on the move, that prevented him from cultivating the undoubted skill that he evidenced, when a young man, with the pencil; but he has left a record of this particular holiday in verse which, if not of enduring quality, (it was

entirely written in the course of an evening at an Interlaken Hotel), is sufficiently amusing to bear sampling, though it is far too lengthy to quote in full. The ease and dexterity with which he introduces into his verse such names as Herbesthal, Wartesaal, Dampschiff, and Schweizerhof, cannot but excite admiration.

Seven citizens of Birmingham
  On foreign travel bent,
Set out to London's famous town,
  And then to Dover went.

Then follow 90 verses descriptive of their wanderings and adventures on the Rhine and in Switzerland, till at the end

And having done with Switzerland,
  Feasted at "Schweizerhof";
And after, found the Ostend train,
  Then in dark night set off.

And so they travelled all that night,
  Through Alsace and Lorraine
To Strasburg's tower, which overlooks
  All the broad German plain.

Past Metz of warlike fame they came,
  And into Belgium sped,
And Brussels reached in early morn,
  And hungry being, fed.

Then hurrying off for Ostend's pier,
  Full eighty miles or more
O'er flat and fertile Belgium,
  Past busy towns a score.

The sea was rough; the steamer grand
  Soon sped to Dover's cliffs,
And landed these seven Englishmen,
  And nothing went amiss.

So Saddler John, and Thomas D,
  And jolly Heaton came,
With Henson, Sanders, Johnny P,
  To New Street in the train.
But one old soul came with the rest—
  I had forgot him quite:
He did his best while on the way
  To wash his friends all "White."

Two years later he wrote his last Swiss letter to the Class, and this time again in rhyme, concluding with the thought of praise which was ever uppermost in his mind, and a punning apology, which his Scholars, (who immediately ordered the letter to be printed), naturally thought quite superfluous:—

So next First-day morning may He make you glad,
For with thought of His Goodness no heart should be sad,
So "worship the KING, all glorious above,
And gratefully sing His Power and His Love."
Accept these poor rhymes with my love to you all,
Although you may think their merit but small,
Forgive all mistakes for the sake of the writer,
You know his name's White but the mountains are whiter.

Sometimes a visit to another school caused his absence from Severn Street on Sunday; but he always found time for a letter of love and counsel, often referring in homely, practical words to the chapter for the day; as for instance, on one occasion he wrote concerning the life of Joseph:—

"Steadily and constantly to return good for evil is a hard lesson for every one of us, yet it is one, when well learnt, which brings incalculable joy and blessing into our own lives and into the homes and lives of

many others. When all practise this there will indeed be peace on earth."

A visit to Leicester, eight months before his death, was made memorable by the following beautiful lesson from Ephesians:—

"SIR HARRY'S ROAD,
December 8th, 1899.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

Finding I have to be at Leicester for Saturday and Sunday in connection with Adult School work, I shall be again deprived of the opportunity of giving a General Lesson.

A few thoughts which I should perhaps have expressed, after reading Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, chap. ii., I will try and write down, and if agreeable to my dear colleagues and yourselves, they may be read on First-day morning.

Paul says in the 10th verse, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Is it not, therefore, worth our while to consider the idea that God in His Goodness works with Almighty Skill in elevating and in improving our human nature, just in proportion as we put ourselves into His skilful and loving hands.

But we must not forget that there may be a great difference in the material. It is useless to say that all men are equal. We are not all born alike. From the fault or misfortune of our ancestors, we may start on the race of life with heavy burdens

that we cannot get rid of; besides, we are different in the strength both of mind and body. We speak of one "he is a *hard* man," and of others as "*soft and simple*." "He is a *coarse* and he is a *fine* man." Some we describe (and they are members of Class I.) as "*Nature's gentlemen*," and some are born "*mean*."

Let it be understood that the Great Workman does not expect the same results from every kind of material. There is one thing He expects from *all*, and something that He has a right to expect, and that is what all can do. We must begin by loving God. Then, although there are many things in which we may differ, everyone who loves God will some day be with God. This teaches us *all* to be kind and charitable to *all*, and the stronger to bear the burdens of the weaker. So why should I be hard upon another because he differs from me? Let us think of ourselves as materials in God's Workshop, capable of being improved—that whatever comes there, comes to be beautified; and has not Severn Street School been one of God's Workshops, where not a few of us have been polished and refined during the past fifty years and more?

I think it is John Ruskin who says, it is "Art which gives form to thought and beauty to utility." How well this applies to God, the Great Workman. He is the Almighty Artist. There is no limit to His skill or power. He has worked through all Eternity. He needs no candle or lamp in these dark days. How He shows His skill in the grace and beauty He gives to the humblest things. We can see the wonderful work of His hands everywhere. Sometimes the names of great painters or

sculptors are put upon their works; but God does not need to put His name on anything He makes. Is it a tiny flower? no one makes it but Him; and as the great and good Dr. Pye Smith once said, "He shows as much skill in the eye of a fly as in the Planet Jupiter."

God in His infinite Love will shape us rightly, if only we will let Him; whether it is a coarse or a fine man He takes in hand, the man must be the better for it. Don't let anyone be disheartened, because he feels inferior to someone else. Remember, the penny has the Queen's head upon it as well as the sovereign, and it is as much a coin of the realm.

It is well for us to have confidence in the Workman. How differently two blocks of marble may be used; one is taken to the studio of the sculptor to be carved into a lovely statue, to be admired for ages; another is sawn into slabs to make a counter top or a wash stand, but all are beautiful or useful in their right places.

Let all of us who are lovers of God never forget we are in His Studio. It is not the purpose of the Heavenly Workman to treat any of us as useless, He will fit us for His own use and make us useful to others. "He taketh pleasure in the work of His hands," as the Bible tells us.

This ought to reconcile us to difficulty and hardships. We must trust the workman. A statue is not finished without some roughness at first. The big mallet and chisel are first to be used to knock off the large and rough pieces, and to any one who didn't know, it would seem as though a nice square block was being knocked to pieces and spoilt. But it isn't so, the sculptor knows

what he is about, and sees in his mind the beauty which is being brought out by every stroke.

And in like manner God can see in the roughest and least taught among us what He designs us for, and if we will submit body and soul to the Heavenly Workman, He will make us vessels fit for His use—will fashion our faces so that with a smile we shall look upward—heavenward.

God was fashioning Joseph just as much when he was in prison in Egypt, waiting on the prisoners and talking to Pharoah's butler and baker, as when he wore the gold chain and rode in a chariot as the ruler of Egypt.

God has fashioned some glorious beings in this world, out of flesh and blood, Moses, Joseph, Elijah, Paul. Think, too, of the many glorious men and women since Bible times, who are God's workmanship; yet none of these ever thought they had climbed where there were no loftier heights. So we shall begin in heaven where we left off on earth, just as the student begins at college where he left off at school.

Your affectionate friend,

WILLIAM WHITE.

The foregoing is characteristic of the man whose faith in the possibilities for good underlying the human race never wavered. Even that most unpromising class, those who borrow without intention of repaying, who receive without giving out, and there are always such, were never hopeless or without excuse in his eyes. It was to him easier to give than to withhold, and, while very

often much good came to the recipient, the other side of the question was not sufficiently clear to his perception; and like all generous men he was sometimes imposed upon by those who cultivated his friendship for the sake of the pecuniary help that he gave only too readily to those who asked it. This was, naturally, a source of grief to the great mass of his Scholars, who loved him too well to see him imposed upon without protest, but, when money troubles clouded his later years, he, at least, was never known to complain that he had been too generous in the past.

CHAPTER VII.

MUNICIPAL WORK.

> "He bowed himself
> With all obedience to the King, and wrought
> All kind of service with a noble ease,
> That graced the lowliest act in doing it."
>
> *Tennyson.*

IN November, 1873, William White was asked to become a candidate for the representation of St. Mary's Ward on the Town Council, and, feeling it right to accept, he entered into the contest with his customary energy. His opponent was Michael Maher, a local publican, and the fight was a stiff one, as St. Mary's was, and is, one of the poorest wards in the Town, and poverty and drink go hand-in-hand. However, Severn Street Scholars turned out to canvass as one man, and William White was returned by a small majority, winning a victory which has been notable from that day to this, for since then no retailer of intoxicating liquor has ever had a seat on the Birmingham Town or City Council.

Those were the days of the rise of a political giant into prominence, for Joseph Chamberlain was shewing in the Town Council the same power of control over men and things which he was afterwards to display on the larger stage of Westminster.

Early in 1875 the "Artisans' Dwellings Act" gave, to the local authorities of towns of more than 25,000 inhabitants, the power to acquire property to enable them to deal with unhealthy areas by removing buildings unsuitable for habitation, and by letting the land so obtained for the provision of artisans' dwellings and for *other improvement purposes;* but without special authority from the Local Government Board the local authority had no power to *build* on land so obtained.

A stranger coming to Birmingham in the early seventies would have seen a few busy, prosperous streets in the centre of the town, intersecting a large area of squalid, filthy slums, foul and insanitary in themselves and a source of contamination for the whole district. Joseph Chamberlain foresaw the advantage it would be to the town if its business centre could be cleansed and rebuilt, and he recognised the immense knowledge that William White had of the working classes of Birmingham, and the influence that he possessed over them by proposing him as Chairman of the "Improvement Committee" appointed by the Town Council in July, 1875.

The Report of the Medical Officer of Health in the Autumn of that year gave the death rate in St. Mary's Ward as 26·82, and that of wealthy Edgbaston as 13·11 per thousand per annum, and condemned the overcrowded courts in the former district in the strongest terms.

As Chairman of the Improvement Committee, William White introduced its report to the Town Council. It was not as a mere theorist that he spoke, but from practical knowledge gained by personal visits to the ten thousand poverty-stricken inhabitants of the district in question (roughly, that part of the town lying between New Street and the far end of Steelhouse Lane.) He described it as the worst district in the whole of Birmingham, and referred in convincing terms to the misery and degradation caused by the conditions under which thousands of their fellow-townsmen had to live. As he passed from house to house he had constantly heard such remarks as—

"No good trying to keep clean here, give it up as a bad job."

"What have people got to do but drink here? It's their only comfort."

"There's nothing but dirt and nastiness to live in, or stinks and smells; the only thing to make people jolly is a drop of drink."

William White said before the Council that he wished these details to go deep into their hearts as

a claim upon them on behalf of such a district. "The only prosperous people were the publicans, light and warmth were in their dwellings, if not sweetness, and they were the only escape of the people from the darkness of their lives." "The more misery, the fewer the bakers, and the more the publicans." The floors of the houses were damp, some of them below the level of the courts, and they suffered through the oozing of filth through the walls, causing horrible stenches. The amount of sickness was enormous. He went from house to house seeing sickly people, hearing such a story of illness and its attendant misery as would, even for this small district, fill a volume. "Let them think of the cost to the Town and the expenditure from the Poor Rates that such a condition of things entailed, was it not time that the Council should endeavour, now that they had greater facilities given them, to leave no stone unturned by which all or part of such evils might be removed. Much of the misery of the people no doubt depended on themselves, but it was equally incumbent upon the Town Council, who had the care of the health and comfort of the population, so far as lay in their power, to place every inhabitant in a condition of health and comfort." He gave a description of the wretched state of things that existed, how hundreds of houses were wholly unfit for human habitation, and only deserved to be condemned, if the

Corporation had power to do so. It reminded him of Strasburg, which he saw after the bombardment. A few of the cases which he cited shewed what interest he displayed on behalf of the people. One industrious man had his £40 of savings invested in the stock and goodwill of a green-grocery, and when William White was taken up into the back-chamber he found the ceiling had fallen down upon the children's bed, while the water had streamed through the bed of the husband and wife to the next floor and into the only sitting-room. He found another house of only two rooms, 9ft. square, 6ft. 6in. high, and in this house lived husband and wife and four children, the eldest between fifteen and sixteen. In one court such statements as: "Buried four, only one left"; "buried six, married twelve years;" "buried two, I wish you would come and smell this cellar," said one woman, and on going down he found a most abominable odour. "We can't eat our victuals or keep them, impossible to enjoy life here, lived here fourteen years." A large portion of the working population, it was satisfactory to know, could afford to live in decent houses, but there was another very large class of poor and incapable people, whom it was quite as much the duty of the Council to care for and take an interest in as those who were stronger and more capable. He believed that no more urgently needed scheme had been brought before the Council, nor

any that would reflect more credit upon the Corporation or bring more blessings upon the population.

The report of the Committee recommended that the Corporation should acquire land and buildings in the centre of the town at a cost including that of making new streets of about £1,350,000, but the estimated value of the surplus land, after laying out of new streets and widening existing ones, would reduce the nett cost to £550,000. The proposed scheme was considerably extended later on, but the estimate of cost was not materially altered, except that £50,000 extra was spent in increasing the width of Corporation Street, the great new thoroughfare, to sixty-six feet.

Making allowances for the increased rateable value of the improved area, Joseph Chamberlain estimated the nett cost to the town at only £12,000 per annum. The Scheme was approved on October 16th, 1875, but pending its confirmation by the Local Government Board the Improvement Committee had no power to purchase, and as it was advisable to buy some property at once an Improvement Trust was formed, at the suggestion of Joseph Chamberlain, and nearly £58,000 guaranteed by members of the Council, of which sum Joseph Chamberlain made himself responsible for £10,000 and William White for £1,000. One of the conditions of the Trust was as follows:—"No member

Photo by J. F. Pike.

WILLIAM WHITE'S HOUSE, CAVERSHAM VILLA, EDGBASTON.

shall derive the smallest personal profit from the Trust's operations, although he may sustain a loss."

Mr. Chamberlain advocated the Bill before the Local Government Board, and it was confirmed in its entirety in the spring of 1876.

The next few years saw William White almost continuously engaged in the work of the Improvement Committee, and the Scheme, which has largely transformed Birmingham from the "great overgrown village" of the seventies to the fine city of the present day, was to a very large extent the result of his labour of love. He would have been the last man to claim that the result was perfect. It is always far easier to destroy than to rebuild; and that part of the Scheme, which provided for the re-housing of the eight to ten thousand displaced inhabitants, was never carried out except to a very limited extent. Those who expected that the doing away with a certain number of courts and alleys would produce a Utopia were disappointed; the large section of the very poor, who are so from their own vices and failings, only gravitate to the lowest social strata and make foul slums still fouler as soon as they are evicted from their former abodes. If a reproach of unfulfilled pledges be deserved it is not however against William White that it is due, but against those who prevented the more progressive members of the Council from carrying out the whole of the Scheme.

He made many new friends in the course of his visits of inspection as Chairman of the Improvement Committee, and had many stories to tell of his adventures; which, despite their sadness, had an amusing side also. "How James Bell got a Better House," is told by him in a little eight-page leaflet, which is well worth reading, and probably the self-same James Bell was not the only recruit brought to the Adult Schools and subsequent prosperity through the indirect agency of the upheaval caused in the town by the Improvement Scheme.

In addition to his work on the Improvement Committee, he served for many years on the Health Committee and the Baths and Parks Committee, of which he was for some years Chairman. The work of the Parks Sub-Committee was especially congenial to him as a practical gardener, and the beautiful flower beds at Cannon Hill were a source of great delight to him. In this regard it is interesting to recall the fact that it was not till 1856 (seven years after William White came to Birmingham) that the town possessed its first public park, while thirty-two years later their area, including 82 acres on the Lickey Hills, ten miles away, was nearly 350 acres.

In 1878 he was elected as a Governor of King Edward's School; and in 1882 the Town honoured itself in conferring the honour of the Mayoralty upon him.

Perhaps the most noteworthy features of his tenure of office were, in the first place that the Mayoral hospitality was entirely of a Teetotal description; and, secondly, that it was exercised in rather a different direction than usual, the number of invited guests to the various entertainments at the Council House including many hundreds who would certainly not be in a position to repay the Mayoral entertainments in kind.

During his year of office occurred the reception of the Malagasy Ambassadors, Madagascar had ambassadors in those days; and the festivities in celebration of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of John Bright's Election as one of the Members of Parliament for Birmingham, which occupied nearly the whole of a sunny week in June. The great orator's political friends and admirers crowded into Birmingham from all parts of the kingdom, and some from the United States. It became William White's duty in his official capacity as Mayor to meet John Bright with an Address of Welcome at a suburban station, and then entering a carriage to join an immense procession and drive through eight miles of decorated streets amid the applause of tens of thousands of admiring citizens to the Town Hall, where a great banquet, presided over by Lord Granville, awaited the honoured guest.

William White had many other opportunities of meeting John Bright, both before and after this

occasion, and the two men had very much in common, besides their political convictions. Writing of the historic occasion when John Bright made his first speech to his constituents after his election for Birmingham in 1857, William White says:—

"Some men in their combative moods show great strength, but in their kindly hours their strength disappears. They seem to lapse into a more gracious temper when their force is spent, and then they are positively weak. With John Bright the strength was always present. It was always apparent that beneath the gentleness and the kindliness there were foundations of granite.

Although his speeches are permeated with a religious spirit, and contain many passages which derive their dignity and splendour from the recognition of the Divine and Eternal order which environs the conflicts and vicissitudes, the misery and injustice of human history, it was only on rare occasions that he gave explicit expression in public to his deep religious faith. But there must be many still living who heard his first words spoken to a public meeting of his Birmingham constituents, and, though they were spoken thirty years ago, none who heard them can have forgotten them. He had recently recovered from a serious illness. He had been returned for Birmingham in his absence, and some time passed before he was able to meet us. The Town Hall was densely crowded. Mr. Bright had rarely spoken in Birmingham, and his constituents were eager to hear him. When he rose to speak there was immense

excitement; the passionate and prolonged cheering was renewed again and again, and seemed as though it would never cease. In his first words he told us that it was nearly three years since he had been able to stand upon any public platform, and that, during that period, he had passed through a new and a great experience. From apparent health he had been brought down to a condition of weakness exceeding the weakness of a little child, in which he could neither read nor write, nor converse for more than a few minutes without distress and without peril; and from that condition, by degrees so fine as to be imperceptible to himself, he had been restored to the comparative health in which we then beheld him.

And then, after a pause, he added:—'In remembrance of all this, is it wrong in me to acknowledge here, in the presence of you all, with reverent and thoughtful heart, the signal favour which has been extended to me by the Great Supreme?' The hush which had fallen upon the vast assembly as soon as he began to speak deepened into awe. Most of us, I suppose, had come expecting an eloquent and vehement appeal for justice on behalf of the millions of adult Englishmen, who were, at that time, excluded from the political franchise, and denied all direct and constitutional control over the legislation and policy of their country. We had expected a fierce assault on the 'obstinacy' and 'iniquity' of the defenders of what the Orator afterwards described as the 'Fabric of Privilege,' but the storms of political passion were for a moment stilled; we suddenly found ourselves in the Presence of

had to introduce myself. He said he had been reading for an hour in his bedroom, but that the balmy morning had tempted him out, and I accompanied him into the garden. He thought Edgbaston a beautiful suburb, looked attentively at shrubs and flowers, and glanced at the spacious glass houses, but preferred the open air. I referred to his prowess as a woodman, 'Yes,' he said, 'there is real pleasure in hard work, it is as healthful to the mind as to the body.

At the breakfast table I sat between Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, and he began to ply me with innumerable questions: Cardinal Newman — The Clergy of Birmingham—Evangelicalism, etc. I told him I was one of the people called Quakers, and he spoke of the many he had esteemed amongst Friends—the Croppers, Peases, Sturges, —and especially of John Bright, and the strength and support he had always had personally from him."

Then they went on to speak of the condition of the working classes, when Mrs. Gladstone interfered with, 'My dear, you are not giving Mr. White time to get his breakfast', and Mr. Gladstone had to turn his attention to his host and the other guest (a Birmingham Alderman). Soon afterwards, Mr. Chamberlain said, 'Mr. Gladstone, you should ask Mr. White some questions relating to a work in which he is specially interested—Adult Schools',

and so for twenty minutes William White discoursed to a willing listener, and the information as to the Severn Street First-day Schools was, without doubt, stored away for possible future use in some corner of that marvellous brain.

When the split in the Liberal Party on the Home Rule Question came, William White was one of the foremost of the local Liberals to follow the leadership of Bright and Chamberlain, and he was a member of the Liberal Unionist party to the end of his life. But difference of political opinion did not cause him to withdraw his admiration of the character of the great Liberal Leader, nor did he himself ever lose the respect and regard of those who had formerly been of his party. It could not be but that some friendships should be strained, if not broken; and, in a City where party feeling ran very high, much bitterness was caused between former companions in arms, who each and all claimed for themselves that they were of the party to whom the old standard belonged. But time heals many wounds, and, towards the end of his life, William White was drawn closer again to some old friends who yet continued to differ from him politically.

Another very interesting event of William White's mayoralty concerned an acquaintance of a very different stamp from those already referred to. In February, 1883, a young Irish-American, Albert George Whitehead, a man of quiet and orderly

Photo by J. F. Pike.

WILLIAM WHITE'S GARDEN.

demeanour, was arrested in Birmingham for complicity in a Fenian plot, many gallons of nitro-glycerine being discovered in the scullery of his house in Digbeth. The prisoner was formally committed for trial by William White, as Mayor; and finally sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. The event was not without its humorous side, and William White loved to relate how the 160lbs. of deadly explosive were ordered to be destroyed by pouring it over the surface of the land at the sewage farm; and the police inspector, who had charge of the matter, saw fit to have the nitro-glycerine taken down to Saltley on a cart which he himself drove. The man received a substantial Government reward, but it is almost a miracle that it did not take the form of a pension to his widow.

As a magistrate, William White gained the respect and love of all who came in contact with him, outside the prisoner's dock, but no magistrate can expect to give entire satisfaction to those on whom he has to pass sentence. In 1895 he had occasion to fine a man half-a-crown for neglecting to send his son to school regularly; next day, when William White was leaving his house, the man was waiting for him with a brandished axe, demanding the return of the half-crown. William White gradually moved backwards to get out of range of the weapon, but was much relieved to

see a couple of cabmen, from a stand near by, coming up; at whose appearance the man made off, though he was soon afterwards captured by the police.

Only William White's testimony, that he believed the poor man was not responsible for his actions, saved him from a heavy sentence; and, for a long time afterwards, he befriended the man, regularly visiting him at his own home.

CHAPTER VIII.

WILLIAM WHITE AS A FRIEND.

"Brother, we are surely bound
On the same journey—and our eyes alike
Turn up and onward: wherefore now thou risest,—
Lean on my arm, and let us for a space
Pursue the path together! Ah, 'tis much
In this so weary pilgrimage, to meet
A royal face like thine."

Buchanan.

QUAKERISM has never had a more loyal advocate than William White; and, though he considered that he owed much in his life to the fact that he had joined Friends as a young man, the debt was repaid many times over in faithful and loving service rendered by him to the Society. As a minister of the Gospel his special power lay with audiences of working men, and he possibly felt to a certain extent a self-imposed restraint when addressing a Friends' Meeting for worship. The lively humour

and versatile imagination could not have full play on these occasions. But his ministry was always acceptable, and at times especially helpful, and those who were present were much impressed by his beautiful and solemn address on the text, "Whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage," at the Wednesday Morning Meeting, only six days before his death.

It is a striking testimony to the regard and esteem in which, even as a young man, he was held in the Society that, in 1853 (when he had been scarcely ten years a member), he was appointed Clerk of the Birmingham Preparative Meeting. During the succeding five years the present Meeting House in Bull Street was planned and erected. Many adjourned Preparative Meetings had to be held, while the discussions as to seating and heating, lighting and ventilating must have called forth all the tact and ability the Clerk possessed: for these are subjects on which every one has opinions and on which no two opinions are likely to be the same.

The total number of Friends in Birmingham did not at that time much exceed 400, and there was only one Meeting House (Bull Street) in place of the numerous scattered meetings at the end of the century. Friends also lived very close together, many of them over their shops, and William White and his partner were by no means the only young men who were accustomed to close their places of

business for an hour on "Fourth-day" morning in order to attend the mid-week Meeting for worship. To the end of his life he was one of the most regular in attending this Meeting, and seldom allowed any other engagement to interfere with the quiet hour of worship.

In 1859 the death of Joseph Sturge deprived him of a much loved friend. Writing of this event William White says:—

"I saw him apparently well one pleasant spring evening. He promised to call the next morning early at my house, but the sad news came at breakfast time that he had suddenly passed away.

Birmingham universally mourned. John Bright and John Angell James (the latter died six months later) were present at the funeral. I recorded one striking testimony, among many others, given in my hearing by a working man: 'Birmingham will be a different place without Mr. Sturge. Why, he wasn't a bit proud; he used to make himself just one of *we*. Yes, and if anybody called at his house he was just as kind as though we *was* his equals, and seemed to thank us for calling and asking for anything. Ah, we shall never see his like *no more*.'"

But Joseph Sturge had a worthy successor.

Fifty years ago the old exclusiveness still obtained, a young man was expected to lay his hand upon his mouth, and, if a "convinced" Friend, to demean himself as became his less privileged

condition. On one occasion, venturing to express a strong doubt as to the propriety of some decision the Monthly Meeting was about to make, William White was reproved by an elderly Friend thus, "I am surprised that a young man, and one who entered the Society by convincement, should express himself in such strong terms." On another occasion when William White was Clerk of the Preparative Meeting, a dear old patriarch came hurrying up the aisle, after enjoying himself too long by the library fire between meetings, with the remark "I am surprised that the Clerk should have begun the business before *I* came into Meeting." Friends, wishing to alter the afternoon meeting from 3-0 to 3-30, made the change, perhaps not unintentionally, when the said elderly Friend was away from home, and on his return were told "very wrong! very wrong! to alter meeting when *I* was away." On one of those occasions the late Joseph Sturge went out of his way to give a word of encouragement to the young Clerk. "Ah!" William White used to say, "Joseph Sturge was always a friend of the oppressed."

And so in later years how often were similar kindly words spoken by William White himself to young men who in their turn needed help and encouragement! And not only by his Scholars, or by his juniors, was his friendship valued. Scarcely a town of any size in England but held some

friend, or friends, of his to whom his house was always hospitably open whenever they might be visiting Birmingham, and his kindly, sympathetic nature endeared him alike to his juniors and his contemporaries.

The writer has before him a letter penned more than thirty years ago by William White to a friend who had lost his wife, and the words seem far more than mere conventional phrases, so easy at such a time:—

My sister and myself are deeply sorrowful in hearing of thy irreparable loss. I would that we could say a single word that could afford thee comfort, or express our real and heartfelt sympathy.

Let me recall all *your* kindness in words and acts a few weeks ago (on the occasion of Cornelius Pike's death), and assure thee how glad we should be now in any way to reciprocate it.

Well, my dear friend, thou, like ourselves, sorrows not without hope. While we mourn a little longer here, we are well assured that those we loved so dearly are safe.

'Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in.'

May the Heavenly Comforter be very near thee, may He lighten thy sorrowful and seemingly dark path, and even give thee to rejoice in Christ Jesus, the *Same* yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Thy sincere and affectionate friend,

WILLIAM WHITE.

His willingness to accept as duties, labours imposed upon him in the way of social or religious service was a very striking characteristic of William White; and this sometimes led to his undertaking more than he could easily perform. It was rarely indeed that he refused a service laid upon him by the Meeting of which he was a member, and this trait gave special force to his occasional appeals in later years for a greater willingness amongst Friends to accept services, however slight or however onerous, imposed on them by the Society.

CHAPTER XI.

HOME.

"God bends from out the deep and says,
'I gave thee the great gift of life;
Wast thou not called in many ways?
Are not My earth and heaven at strife?
I gave thee of My seed to sow,
Bringest thou Me My hundred-fold?'
Can I look up with face aglow,
And answer, 'Father, here is gold?'"

J. R. Lowell.

AS in his early days at Reading when, as an invalid, his bath-chair was the centre of merriment in any little party of which he formed a member; so also in any social gathering or Friends' Reading Society's excursion, he was always bright and cheery, full of amusing jokes, stories or reminiscences of his long and varied life; and he never tired during the longest walk or the stiffest climb. How well one can recall that familiar figure, the white hair—allowed to grow somewhat long, and bushing out on each side over his ears; the kindly face,

grey eyes, ever quick to show the lively play of his thoughts, and the mobile mouth, always closely shut when in repose. His head, as he walked, was thrust slightly forward, on shoulders rounded with years. He always had a nod and smile for any passing friend, never dawdled, never used his hands in a crowd, and stepped firmly to the end of his life.

Such was William White, the most familiar figure of all who passed through the streets of Birmingham; known to all, from the Policeman to the urchin selling newspapers; and beloved by all.

William White's active life did not prevent him from being a wide reader, and, without making any claim to scholarship, there were certain subjects, such as the past history of the Society of Friends in the Midlands, in which he was a recognised authority, and his book on "Friends in Warwickshire" passed through several editions. For many years he gave an immense amount of care to the editing of the *Monthly Record*, the organ of the Adult School Movement, which was finally succeeded by *One and All*, and his tracts, such as "What came of a Pudding"; "Mary Grove"; and "The Society of Friends, Commonly called Quakers"; have been of wide value in their various ways.

The man of warm sympathies is, unfortunately, as a rule too easily imposed upon; and William White was for many years considered fair game by many

a professional beggar, who used to lie in wait for him outside his place of business or house with cunningly varied tale of woe. Many a morning did our friend, on catching sight of a too well remembered face, dive down a side street and round to the back entrance of his Printing Works in Moor Street in hope of eluding the watchful one at the front door; but it was seldom indeed, that he did not close an interview with a stealthy transfer of half-a-crown or five shillings, and many a really genuine case of need was helped by him almost daily. When financial troubles came upon him, towards the end of his life, probably no man living could have borne them with a lighter heart, so far as he was personally concerned, but it was a constant and bitter grief to him no longer to have the means of relieving cases of want and suffering that had never before appealed to him in vain. Still he kept a brave heart and cheery word for those around him, and never for one instant forgot the needs of others in his own trouble. The incessant strain was, however, telling upon him; the figure was more bent than formerly; the step less alert; and those nearest to him knew what a terrible ordeal he was undergoing. In the summer of 1900 he took no holiday; but he had arranged to spend a week or two in September with Sir Richard Tangye in Cornwall, and his friends were hoping that the change might prove of real benefit to

him. But it was not to be. A business journey to Reading, where for fifty years he had personally called on Huntley and Palmers, resulted in a severe chill, which after his return home developed into serious illness. He never rallied, and on Tuesday morning, the 12th of September, he passed quietly away.

The news of his death spread far and wide throughout the city of his adoption, and was to thousands the news of the passing of a dear friend. By the grave-side in Witton Cemetery on the succeeding Saturday afternoon were seen strong men sobbing like children for one who was no kin of theirs save in the Brotherhood of Christ's Service. But the key-note of that gathering was not of grief but of praise and thankfulness—praise for the life that had been such a rich blessing to others, and thankfulness that to him at last had come the full reward of his labours. Upon this hushed assembly fell the words of the Apostle John: "He that loveth his brother abideth in the Light." In that sentence lay the secret of the power of William White's life and we gave praise to the Giver of all good things.

. . . . . .

This Memoir may fittingly conclude with the words written of William White by one who had known him, loved, and worked with him for over forty years:—

"The lesson of his life was chiefly in the object lesson it presents of what may be accomplished by the 'average man,' if he is filled with the Spirit of Jesus Christ. William White had no special advantages of intellect, of social position, of wealth, or of education. But he had the crowning qualification of an absolutely unselfish love, and his gifts were laid ungrudgingly at the feet of his Lord. His is not a life that will live in the pages of history. No monument of marble will perpetuate his memory. Amid the remorseless pressure of events his name will quickly be forgotten; but his memorial is with God. He has left behind him a record, nobler far than that of many whose names are household words; a record of unselfish service, of homes purified and sweetened through his influence, and of men whom he has taken by the hand and led lovingly back to their Saviour and their God."

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.

The following are extracts from a very few out of some three hundred letters of sympathy received by William White's sister, shewing how very widely his life had been appreciated by men of widely varied views and natures.

From Joseph Chamberlain, M.P.

"It is now thirty years since we first worked together in public life, and I have always entertained the greatest respect for your brother's conscientious devotion to all good work, and the greatest affection for his private character.

He has fought the good fight, and is at rest. It is hard for his relatives and friends to lose him; and, although we have been separated lately a good deal by the demands of my official work, I hope I may be counted amongst the most sincere of those who will miss his cheery smile and kindly ways."

From JESSE COLLINGS, M.P.

"I feel I have lost a dear friend, on whose sympathy and advice and help one could always rely at all times, and in all difficulties.

You have, however, the consolation of thinking over his long career of earnest work and exceptional usefulness. How many now living have been blessed by his influence, and have reason to revere his memory. Measured by the highest standards, his has been a grand life, and he has indeed left the world better than he found it."

From GEORGE F. PARKER, Late American Consul in Birmingham.

"It is with extreme sorrow I have noticed the death of your brother William White. Ever since I came to Birmingham I have had the pleasure, not only of knowing him, but of enjoying his confidence. It has been my habit to go to him when any question of public interest, political, social, or religious, came up, upon which I desired information or material. I have always found him so ready in every matter.

But it is as the *friend*, ever sympathetic with me; as well as with my Country, that I will miss him; and I shall always account it as one of the pleasures of residence in a strange land, that I was thus privileged to come into contact with such a man in an intimate way during the last seven years of his long and useful life."

From W. J. CLARKE, "The Peoples Hall" Mission, Birmingham.

"Highly honoured, sincerely loved as our dear friend and brother was, I do not think that he was more loved by any than by the friends and workers connected with this Institution.

I believe that God has had few more faithful servants; Jesus Christ few more faithful and devoted followers; and humanity few more tender hearted helpers than the departed friend and brother whom we now see only in the spirit. Personally, I have more in many ways to thank him for than even you can know. His memory will go with me, a treasured and priceless possession to the end of my days on earth."

APPENDIX II.

TESTIMONY OF WARWICKSHIRE NORTH MONTHLY MEETING OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

IN preparing a testimony respecting our late dear friend William White, we need not enter into the facts of his life in any detail. His venerable figure was more familiar in Birmingham than that of any other citizen, and in like manner he was known to Friends in almost every Meeting of the Kingdom.

He was born at Reading in Seventh Month, 1820, his parents belonged to the Church of England; during his childhood they joined the Wesleyan Methodists, and his early religious associations were with that body. He became a Sunday School teacher at about thirteen years of age, and a few years later he was drawn towards our Society through uniting with some of the young Friends of Reading in an effort to benefit the children in

one of the worst quarters of the town. He joined Friends, whilst still a young man, during a short residence in Derbyshire. In 1848 he entered into business in Birmingham as a printer and stationer, and at once threw himself into the First-day Adult School work, then in its infancy; a work which henceforward formed the great interest of his life. The Society of Friends at that time was passing through a very serious crisis in its history. The old *régime* was breaking up. On the one hand the revival of spiritual life under new aspects, and on the other the freer social spirit of the day, made the quiet old-world life of the older members impossible for the young and vigorous life that was coming forward, and it was of vital importance that that young life should not drift away for want of serious religious occupation suited to the altered times. It was still an open question how far the First-day Adult School movement (at that time regarded with apprehension and even disfavour by a large number of older Friends) would hold its own, and there is probably no one to whom our Society owes more than to William White for his unwearied efforts, continued more than fifty years, to spread the knowledge of the work and make its possibilities evident wherever Friends were settled. Many who are now the burden bearers of the Church owe it to his earnest encouragement to enter into First-day School work, that as young men

they found occupation in close connection with the Society of Friends, and so were kept loyal to it.

He was not a man of exceptional intellectual powers, but he had sound common sense and great energy, and these he threw into the cause that specially claimed his heart's love, with the result that few men have done more than he to redeem lives and brighten homes.

Although not the actual originator of the Adult First-day School movement, it is largely to him that it owes its present vitality and influence; he may truly be called its apostle and father. For more than fifty years he was teacher in one of the largest classes in the Birmingham Schools, and probably no teacher connected with the movement could point to a larger number of scholars whose lives had been truly converted from selfish or aimless failures into useful and happy lives worthy of a Christian community. His class had always a first claim on his attention and interest. He allowed nothing to interfere with his attendance on First-day morning except illness or absence on similar work elsewhere. He had an unique knowledge of the individual members of his class, not only being able to recognise them personally and by name, but also generally knowing a good deal of their home surroundings. He constantly visited them at their homes, entering into sympathy with them in the experiences of life, and thus became

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to many of them a trusted and valued adviser in times of trouble, sorrow, or difficulty. It is not wonderful that he was regarded with deep love and devotion in return for this devoted service.

Nor were his sympathies at all confined to his own adult class. He was always ready to assist other schools in Birmingham and throughout the country; distance, or weather, or the multiplicity of engagements in his almost overtaxed life, rarely standing in his way of making a journey with the object of starting a new school, or of helping an old one. There are many places up and down the country where his loss is mourned with a sincerity of affection only a degree less than in the city in which he lived.

William White took a lifelong interest in the Temperance movement. He never attached much importance to the legislative aspect of the question, believing that it was from moral pursuasion and individual influence that the best and most lasting results were to be expected. But he was always ready to assist, to the best of his ability, those who were striving in any way to promote the habit of abstinence from intoxicants; and the number of delegates from Temperance Societies (both local and national) who attended his funeral bore testimony to the sense of the loss the friends of the cause suffered by his death. In his public life he strictly adhered to his principles in this respect,

and never during his mayoralty, or in any public function, deviated from it.

William White spoke in our meetings, more or less, during the greater part of his life after he joined Friends, and had been a recorded Minister since 1877, exercising his gift faithfully. But it was not as a Minister in Friends' meetings for worship that he was at his best. His fear lest he might fall below the dignity of the office prevented him from using those homely illustrations drawn from his experiences and observation of life that constituted so much of the charm and force of his addresses at school and mission meetings, and so his ministry in meetings for worship lacked some of the freshness and originality that generally characterised it elsewhere. Nevertheless his vocal service, and more particular his offerings in prayer, were highly valued by many, and few who heard it will forget his address at the last meeting he attended, within a week of his death, on the passage, "Whom, when Paul saw, he thanked God and took courage."

He was for many years a regular attender of the Yearly Meeting, though he seldom took part in the discussions. In his own meeting he always, as far as practicable, gave a first place in his engagements to meetings for discipline, in which he took an active and useful part.

The lesson of William White's life lies largely

in the fact that its interests were so wide and comprehensive. We need not dwell at length on his great services to the City of Birmingham. In the year 1873 he entered the Council as member for the poorest ward in the city, and from that time until his death he threw himself heartily into public work. Birmingham was the first of the large towns to adopt the provisions of the Artizans' Dwellings Improvement Act. An extensive scheme was introduced for the demolition of insanitary buildings over a large area, and, during its progress through the Council, William White actually visited every house in the ward which he represented. It was to his graphic narrative of his experiences during the course of this visitation that the final adoption of the scheme was largely due. He took a lively interest in the city parks, and, indeed, in every effort of the municipality which was calculated to bring light and sweetness into the homes of the people. In 1883 he filled the office of mayor with efficiency and Christian dignity, and the following year was elected an alderman. For the last fifteen years of his life he was a magistrate, and to the end performed the difficult and often thankless duties of that office. He was connected with many of the philanthropic institutions of Birmingham. The Lord Mayor, in notifying his death to the City Council, said that more than half of the applications made to him by Societies for the use of

the Council-chamber and Committee-rooms for their meetings came through William White. He was a living witness to the truth that it is not the ascetic or the recluse, but he who most fully enters into the life of his fellow-men, that does most to promote the extension of the kingdom of God.

William White was homely and sociable, and rich in the simple qualities which give a man the power of sympathy with others in the experiences of practical life. He possessed the magnetic power of attraction which is so essential for full success in influencing others for good. Unselfish to a degree, his motto was: "By love serve one another," and he was always ready to carry it out without considering his own convenience or predilections. He seldom refused an appointment or stayed to ask if someone else might not do the work better; his willingness sometimes even prompted him to undertake more than he could accomplish, and this from no desire to monopolise, but simply from his hearty goodwill and wish to be of service to others. He never willingly turned from an opportunity of benefiting those around him. Of this characteristic a striking instance occurred within a few days of his death, when, amidst his incessant engagements, he devoted a whole afternoon to attending the funeral of the infant child of one of his scholars at a distant cemetery, because he knew that his presence and consoling words would be a comfort to the

young parents in their sorrow. Of a cheerful temperament, and gifted with a keen sense of humour, possessing also an endless store of anecdotes largely culled from his own experiences of life, he was a charming companion on occasions of social intercourse.

He was, in spite of his many engagements, a great reader, and this, coupled with his constant intercourse with men, gave him an elasticity of mind unusual in men of advanced age, and enabled him to assimilate, or at least to sympathise with, new ideas. This was notably shown by the way in which he, almost alone amongst Friends verging on fourscore, entered into the Summer School Movement: though without any taste for scientific theology or interest in nice points of doctrine, he saw that this was a development that was likely to be a power for good, especially amongst the younger and more thoughtful members of our Society, and as such he gave it his full sympathy and co-operation.

William White was never married, but he had a happy home life with his widowed sister, Anne Pike, and delighted especially in his beautiful garden. During the greater part of his business life his means enabled him in a simple way to extend a wide and kindly hospitality, and also to show much unostentatious charity. The last years of our dear Friend were, however, clouded by

heavy trials in connection with his business, which had become a Limited Company, and it is not the least of the lessons of his life to note the way in which he bore up in the face of difficulties which, involving as they did the loss of others' money as well as his own, were doubly hard for a man of his high integrity of character to bear. It was touching to see how bravely he strove to maintain his Christian cheerfulness, and not to slacken in his efforts for the promotion of his good work to which his long life had been devoted.

In concluding this testimony to our dear Friend, we who have worked side by side with him feel how great is the loss we have sustained in his removal from among us. We desire that the recollection of his long life of service for his Lord, and devotion to the well-being of his fellow men, may stimulate us who remain to like faithfulness. To speak thus of him in the past tense—as of one who was, but is not—is an experience that touches too deeply for many words. He was a loved and revered friend, whose loss to many of us is greater than we can yet comprehend. But we are rich in the possession of an inspiring example. We have lived and laboured by the side of one who was full of the spirit of his Divine Master. Like Jesus Christ, his ambition was to serve. His years were spent and his joy was fulfilled in doing good. We pray that we may build for him an enduring

memorial in lives ennobled by his example, more wholly given than ever before to the service of our Father in Heaven and our brethren.

He died, after a short but severe illness, on the 11th of Ninth Month, 1900, aged eighty years.

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